

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 3967

AN ACT

To improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed
to toxic substances, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

1 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE; REFERENCES TO TITLE 38,**
2 **UNITED STATES CODE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.**

3 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This Act may be cited as the
4 “Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics
5 Act of 2021” or the “Honoring our PACT Act of 2021”.

6 (b) **MATTERS RELATING TO AMENDMENTS TO TITLE**
7 **38, UNITED STATES CODE.**—

8 (1) **REFERENCES.**—Except as otherwise ex-
9 pressly provided, when in this Act an amendment or
10 repeal is expressed in terms of an amendment to, or
11 repeal of, a section or other provision, the reference
12 shall be considered to be made to a section or other
13 provision of title 38, United States Code.

14 (2) **AMENDMENTS TO TABLES OF CONTENTS.**—
15 Except as otherwise expressly provided, when an
16 amendment made by this Act to title 38, United
17 States Code, adds a section or larger organizational
18 unit to that title or amends the designation or head-
19 ing of a section or larger organizational unit in that
20 title, that amendment also shall have the effect of
21 amending any table of sections in that title to alter
22 the table to conform to the changes made by the
23 amendment.

24 (c) **TABLE OF CONTENTS.**—The table of contents for
25 this Act is as follows:

Sec. 1. Short title; references to title 38, United States Code; table of contents.

TITLE I—EXPANSION OF HEALTH CARE ELIGIBILITY

Subtitle A—Toxic-exposed Veterans

- Sec. 101. Short title.
- Sec. 102. Definitions relating to toxic-exposed veterans.
- Sec. 103. Expansion of health care for specific categories of toxic-exposed veterans and veterans supporting certain overseas contingency operations.
- Sec. 104. Assessments of implementation and operation.
- Sec. 105. Revision of breast cancer mammography policy of Department of Veterans Affairs to provide mammography screening for veterans who served in locations associated with toxic exposure.

Subtitle B—Certain Veterans of Combat Service and Other Matters

- Sec. 111. Expansion of period of eligibility for health care for certain veterans of combat service.
- Sec. 112. Authorization period for emergency treatment in non-Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities.

TITLE II—TOXIC EXPOSURE PRESUMPTION PROCESS

- Sec. 201. Short title.
- Sec. 202. Improvements to ability of Department of Veterans Affairs to establish presumptions of service connection based on toxic exposure.
- Sec. 203. Reevaluation of claims for compensation involving presumptions of service connection.

TITLE III—IMPROVING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SERVICE CONNECTION PROCESS FOR TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

- Sec. 301. Short title.
- Sec. 302. Presumptions of toxic exposure.
- Sec. 303. Medical nexus examinations for toxic exposure risk activities.

TITLE IV—PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION

- Sec. 401. Treatment of veterans who participated in cleanup of Enewetak Atoll as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of presumption of service connection of certain disabilities by Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 402. Treatment of veterans who participated in nuclear response near Palomares, Spain, or Thule, Greenland, as radiation-exposed veterans for purposes of presumption of service connection of certain disabilities by Department of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 403. Presumptions of service connection for diseases associated with exposures to certain herbicide agents for veterans who served in certain locations.
- Sec. 404. Addition of additional diseases associated with exposure to certain herbicide agents for which there is a presumption of service connection for veterans who served in certain locations.
- Sec. 405. Improving compensation for disabilities occurring in Persian Gulf War veterans.
- Sec. 406. Presumption of service connection for certain diseases associated with exposure to burn pits and other toxins.

TITLE V—RESEARCH MATTERS

- Sec. 501. Interagency working group on toxic exposure research.
- Sec. 502. Data collection, analysis, and report on treatment of veterans for illnesses related to toxic exposure.
- Sec. 503. Studies related to veterans who served in Southwest Asia and certain other locations.
- Sec. 504. Study on health trends of post 9/11 veterans.
- Sec. 505. Study on cancer rates among veterans.
- Sec. 506. Study on feasibility and advisability of furnishing hospital care and medical services to dependents of veterans who participated in toxic exposure risk activities.
- Sec. 507. Study on health effects of waste related to Manhattan Project on certain veterans.
- Sec. 508. Study on toxic exposure and mental health outcomes.
- Sec. 509. Study on veterans in Territories of the United States.
- Sec. 510. Department of Veterans Affairs public website for toxic exposure research.
- Sec. 511. Biennial report on health effects of jet fuels used by Armed Forces.

TITLE VI—IMPROVEMENT OF RESOURCES AND TRAINING
REGARDING TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS

- Sec. 601. Short title; definitions.
- Sec. 602. Publication of list of resources of Department of Veterans Affairs for toxic-exposed veterans and outreach program for such veterans and caregivers and survivors of such veterans.
- Sec. 603. Incorporation of toxic exposure questionnaire during primary care appointments.
- Sec. 604. Training for personnel of the Department of Veterans Affairs with respect to toxic-exposed veterans.
- Sec. 605. Guidelines for active duty military on potential risks and prevention of toxic exposures.

TITLE VII—REGISTRIES, RECORDS, AND OTHER MATTERS

- Sec. 701. Registry of individuals exposed to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances on military installations.
- Sec. 702. Fort McClellan Health Registry.
- Sec. 703. Independent study on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.
- Sec. 704. Biannual report on Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.
- Sec. 705. Correction of exposure records by members of the Armed Forces and veterans.
- Sec. 706. Federal cause of action relating to water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- Sec. 707. Veterans Toxic Exposures Fund.
- Sec. 708. Authorization of electronic notice in claims under laws administered by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.
- Sec. 709. Authorization of appropriations for expansion of claims automation.
- Sec. 710. Non-applicability of non-Department of Veterans Affairs covenants not to compete to appointment of Veterans Health Administration personnel.
- Sec. 711. Recruitment of physicians on a contingent basis prior to completion of training requirements.
- Sec. 712. Authority for Secretary of Veterans Affairs to award grants to States to improve outreach to veterans.

Sec. 713. Study and report on herbicide agent exposure in Panama Canal Zone.

Sec. 714. Budget information for alternatives to burn pits.

Sec. 715. Authorization of appropriations for expansion of claims automation.

Sec. 716. Burn pit registry updates.

Sec. 717. Burn pit transparency.

1 **TITLE I—EXPANSION OF HEALTH**
 2 **CARE ELIGIBILITY**
 3 **Subtitle A—Toxic-exposed Veterans**

4 **SEC. 101. SHORT TITLE.**

5 This title may be cited as the “Conceding Our Vet-
 6 erans’ Exposures Now And Necessitating Training Act”
 7 or the “COVENANT Act”.

8 **SEC. 102. DEFINITIONS RELATING TO TOXIC-EXPOSED VET-**
 9 **ERANS.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 1710(a)(2)(F) is amend-
 11 ed by striking “who was exposed to a toxic substance, ra-
 12 diation, or other conditions, as provided in subsection (e)”
 13 and inserting “in accordance with subsection (e), who is
 14 a toxic-exposed veteran”.

15 (b) DEFINITIONS OF TOXIC EXPOSURE AND TOXIC-
 16 EXPOSED VETERAN.—Section 101 is amended by adding
 17 at the end the following new paragraphs:

18 “(37) The term ‘toxic exposure’ includes the fol-
 19 lowing:

20 “(A) A toxic exposure risk activity, as defined
 21 in section 1710(e)(4) of this title.

1 “(B) An exposure to a substance, chemical, or
2 airborne hazard identified in the list under section
3 1119(b)(2) of this title.

4 “(38) The term ‘toxic-exposed veteran’ means a vet-
5 eran described in section 1710(e)(1) of this title.”.

6 (c) DEFINITION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIV-
7 ITY.—Section 1710(e)(4) is amended by adding at the end
8 the following new subparagraph:

9 “(C) The term ‘toxic exposure risk activity’
10 means any activity—

11 “(i) that requires a corresponding entry in
12 an exposure tracking record system (as defined
13 in section 1119(c) of this title) for the veteran
14 who carried out the activity; or

15 “(ii) that the Secretary determines quali-
16 fies for purposes of this subsection when taking
17 into account what is reasonably prudent to pro-
18 tect the health of veterans.”.

19 **SEC. 103. EXPANSION OF HEALTH CARE FOR SPECIFIC CAT-**
20 **EGORIES OF TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS AND**
21 **VETERANS SUPPORTING CERTAIN OVERSEAS**
22 **CONTINGENCY OPERATIONS.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—

1 (1) EXPANSION.—Subsection (e) of section
2 1710, as amended by section 102(c), is further
3 amended—

4 (A) in paragraph (1), by adding at the end
5 the following new subparagraphs:

6 “(G) Beginning not later than the applicable date
7 specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2),
8 a veteran who participated in a toxic exposure risk activity
9 while serving on active duty, active duty for training, or
10 inactive duty training is eligible for hospital care (includ-
11 ing mental health services and counseling), medical serv-
12 ices, and nursing home care under subsection (a)(2)(F)
13 for any illness.

14 “(H) Beginning not later than the applicable date
15 specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2),
16 a covered veteran (as defined in section 1119(c) of this
17 title) is eligible for hospital care (including mental health
18 services and counseling), medical services, and nursing
19 home care under subsection (a)(2)(F) for any illness.

20 “(I)(i) Beginning not later than the applicable date
21 specified in paragraph (6), and subject to paragraph (2),
22 a veteran who deployed in support of a contingency oper-
23 ation specified in clause (ii) is eligible for hospital care
24 (including mental health services and counseling), medical

1 services, and nursing home care under subsection
2 (a)(2)(F) for any illness.

3 “(ii) A contingency operation specified in this clause
4 is any of the following:

5 “(I) Operation Enduring Freedom.

6 “(II) Operation Freedom’s Sentinel.

7 “(III) Operation Iraqi Freedom.

8 “(IV) Operation New Dawn.

9 “(V) Operation Inherent Resolve.

10 “(VI) Resolute Support Mission.”; and

11 (B) in paragraph (2)(B)—

12 (i) by striking “or (F)” and inserting
13 “(F), (G), (H), or (I)”; and

14 (ii) by striking “service or testing”
15 and inserting “service, testing, or activity”.

16 (2) PHASE IN.—Such subsection is further
17 amended by adding at the end the following new
18 paragraph:

19 “(6)(A) The Secretary shall determine the dates in
20 subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of paragraph (1) as fol-
21 lows:

22 “(i) October 1, 2024, with respect to a veteran
23 described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was
24 discharged or released from the active military,
25 naval, air, or space service during the period begin-

1 ning on August 2, 1990, and ending on September
2 11, 2001.

3 “(ii) October 1, 2026, with respect to a veteran
4 described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was
5 discharged or released from the active military,
6 naval, air, or space service during the period begin-
7 ning on September 12, 2001, and ending on Decem-
8 ber 31, 2006.

9 “(iii) October 1, 2028, with respect to a veteran
10 described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was
11 discharged or released from the active military,
12 naval, air, or space service during the period begin-
13 ning on January 1, 2007, and ending on December
14 31, 2012.

15 “(iv) October 1, 2030, with respect to a veteran
16 described in such subparagraph (G) or (H) who was
17 discharged or released from the active military,
18 naval, air, or space service during the period begin-
19 ning on January 1, 2013, and ending on December
20 31, 2018.

21 “(v) October 1, 2032, with respect to a veteran
22 described in such subparagraph (I).

23 “(B) The Secretary may modify a date specified in
24 subparagraph (A) to an earlier date, as the Secretary de-
25 termines appropriate based on the number of veterans re-

1 ceiving hospital care, medical services, and nursing home
2 care under subparagraphs (G), (H), and (I) of paragraph
3 (1) and the resources available to the Secretary. If the
4 Secretary determines to so modify a date, the Secretary
5 shall—

6 “(i) notify the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs
7 of the House of Representatives and the Senate of
8 the proposed modification; and

9 “(ii) publish such modified date in the Federal
10 Register.”.

11 (b) OUTREACH PLANS.—With respect to each of
12 clauses (i) through (v) of section 1710(e)(6)(A) of title
13 38, United States Code (as added by subsection (a)(2)),
14 not later than 180 days prior to the date specified in the
15 clause (including a date modified pursuant to such sec-
16 tion), the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
17 Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
18 Senate a plan to conduct outreach to the veterans referred
19 to in the clause to notify such veterans of their eligibility
20 for hospital care, medical services, or nursing home care
21 under subparagraph (G), (H), or (I), of section 1710(e)(1)
22 of such title, as the case may be.

1 **SEC. 104. ASSESSMENTS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND OPER-**
2 **ATION.**

3 (a) INITIAL RESOURCE ASSESSMENT AND RE-
4 PORT.—Not later than 180 days after the date of the en-
5 actment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
6 shall—

7 (1) complete an assessment to determine—

8 (A) the personnel and material resources
9 necessary to implement section 103 (including
10 the amendments made by such section); and

11 (B) the total number of covered veterans,
12 as such term is defined in section 1119(c) of
13 title 38, United States Code (as added by sec-
14 tion 302), who receive hospital care or medical
15 services furnished by the Secretary under chap-
16 ter 17 of such title, disaggregated by priority
17 group specified in section 1705(a) of such title;
18 and

19 (2) submit to the Committees on Veterans' Af-
20 fairs of the House of Representatives and the Senate
21 a report containing the findings of the assessment
22 completed under paragraph (1), including a specific
23 determination as to whether the Department has the
24 personnel and material resources necessary to imple-
25 ment section 103.

1 (b) INFORMATION SYSTEMS.—Not later than October
2 1, 2024, the Secretary shall establish information systems
3 to assess the implementation of section 103, including the
4 amendments made by such section, and use the results
5 of assessments under such systems to inform the reports
6 under subsection (c).

7 (c) ANNUAL REPORTS.—

8 (1) REPORTS.—Not later than October 1, 2025,
9 and on an annual basis thereafter until October 1,
10 2033, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees
11 on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives
12 and the Senate a report on the following:

13 (A) The effect of the implementation of,
14 and the provision and management of care
15 under, section 103, (including the amendments
16 made by such section) on the demand by vet-
17 erans described in subparagraphs (G), (H), and
18 (I) of section 1710(e)(1) of title 38, United
19 States Code (as added by such section 103) for
20 health care services furnished by the Secretary.

21 (B) Any differing patterns of demand for
22 health care services by such veterans,
23 disaggregated by factors such as the relative
24 distance of the veteran from medical facilities of
25 the Department and whether the veteran had

1 previously received hospital care or medical
2 services furnished by the Secretary under chap-
3 ter 17 of such title.

4 (C) The extent to which the Secretary has
5 met such demand.

6 (D) Any changes, during the year covered
7 by the report, in the delivery patterns of health
8 care furnished by the Secretary under chapter
9 17 of such title, and the fiscal impact of such
10 changes.

11 (2) MATTERS.—Each report under paragraph
12 (1) shall include, with respect to the year covered by
13 the report, detailed information on the following:

14 (A) The total number of veterans enrolled
15 in the patient enrollment system who, during
16 such year, received hospital care or medical
17 services furnished by the Secretary under chap-
18 ter 17 of title 38, United States Code.

19 (B) Of the veterans specified in subpara-
20 graph (A), the number of such veterans who,
21 during the preceding three fiscal years, had not
22 received such care or services.

23 (C) With respect to the veterans specified
24 in subparagraph (B), the cost of providing
25 health care to such veterans during the year

1 covered by the report, shown in total and
2 disaggregated by—

3 (i) the level of care; and

4 (ii) whether the care was provided
5 through the Veterans Community Care
6 Program.

7 (D) With respect to the number of vet-
8 erans described in subparagraphs (G), (H), and
9 (I) of section 1710(e)(1) of title 38, United
10 States Code (as added by section 103), the fol-
11 lowing (shown in total and disaggregated by
12 medical facility of the Department, as applica-
13 ble):

14 (i) The number of such veterans who,
15 during the year covered by the report, en-
16 rolled in the patient enrollment system.

17 (ii) The number of such veterans who
18 applied for, but were denied, such enroll-
19 ment.

20 (iii) The number of such veterans who
21 were denied hospital care or a medical
22 service furnished by the Secretary that was
23 considered to be medically necessary but
24 not of an emergency nature.

1 (E) The numbers and characteristics of,
2 and the type and extent of health care fur-
3 nished by the Secretary to, veterans enrolled in
4 the patient enrollment system (shown in total
5 and disaggregated by medical facility of the De-
6 partment).

7 (F) The numbers and characteristics of,
8 and the type and extent of health care fur-
9 nished by the Secretary to, veterans not en-
10 rolled in the patient enrollment system
11 (disaggregated by each class of eligibility for
12 care under section 1710 of title 38, United
13 States Code, and further shown as a total per
14 class and disaggregated by medical facility of
15 the Department).

16 (G) The specific fiscal impact (shown in
17 total and disaggregated by geographic health
18 care delivery areas) of changes in the delivery
19 patterns of health care furnished by the Sec-
20 retary under chapter 17 of such title as a result
21 of the implementation of section 103 (including
22 the amendments made by such section).

23 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

24 (1) The term “patient enrollment system”
25 means the patient enrollment system of the Depart-

1 ment of Veterans Affairs established and operated
2 under section 1705 of title 38, United States Code.

3 (2) The term “Veterans Community Care Pro-
4 gram” means the program established under section
5 1703 of title 38, United States Code.

6 **SEC. 105. REVISION OF BREAST CANCER MAMMOGRAPHY**
7 **POLICY OF DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AF-**
8 **FAIRS TO PROVIDE MAMMOGRAPHY SCREEN-**
9 **ING FOR VETERANS WHO SERVED IN LOCA-**
10 **TIONS ASSOCIATED WITH TOXIC EXPOSURE.**

11 (a) IN GENERAL.—Section 7322 of title 38, United
12 States Code, is amended—

13 (1) in subsection (a), by striking “The” and in-
14 serting “IN GENERAL.—The”;

15 (2) in subsection (b)—

16 (A) by striking “The” and inserting
17 “STANDARDS FOR SCREENING.—The”; and

18 (B) in paragraph (2)(B), by inserting “a
19 record of service in a location and during a pe-
20 riod specified in subsection (d),” after “risk
21 factors,”; and

22 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
23 sections:

24 “(c) **ELIGIBILITY FOR SCREENING FOR VETERANS**
25 **EXPOSED TO TOXIC SUBSTANCES.**—The Under Secretary

1 for Health shall ensure that, under the policy developed
2 under subsection (a), any veteran who, during active mili-
3 tary, naval, or air service, was deployed in support of a
4 contingency operation in a location and during a period
5 specified in subsection (d), is eligible for a mammography
6 screening by a health care provider of the Department.

7 “(d) LOCATIONS AND PERIODS SPECIFIED.—(1) The
8 locations and periods specified in this subsection are the
9 following:

10 “(A) Iraq during following periods:

11 “(i) The period beginning on August 2,
12 1990, and ending on February 28, 1991.

13 “(ii) The period beginning on March 19,
14 2003, and ending on such date as the Secretary
15 determines burn pits are no longer used in Iraq.

16 “(B) The Southwest Asia theater of operations,
17 other than Iraq, during the period beginning on Au-
18 gust 2, 1990, and ending on such date as the Sec-
19 retary determines burn pits are no longer used in
20 such location, including the following locations:

21 “(i) Kuwait.

22 “(ii) Saudi Arabia.

23 “(iii) Oman.

24 “(iv) Qatar.

1 “(C) Afghanistan during the period beginning
2 on September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as
3 the Secretary determines burn pits are no longer
4 used in Afghanistan.

5 “(D) Djibouti during the period beginning on
6 September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
7 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
8 Djibouti.

9 “(E) Syria during the period beginning on Sep-
10 tember 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
11 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
12 Syria.

13 “(F) Jordan during the period beginning on
14 September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
15 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
16 Jordan.

17 “(G) Egypt during the period beginning on
18 September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
19 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
20 Egypt.

21 “(H) Lebanon during the period beginning on
22 September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
23 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
24 Lebanon.

1 “(I) Yemen during the period beginning on
2 September 11, 2001, and ending on such date as the
3 Secretary determines burn pits are no longer used in
4 Yemen.

5 “(J) Such other locations and corresponding pe-
6 riods as set forth by the Airborne Hazards and Open
7 Burn Pit Registry established under section 201 of
8 the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits
9 Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38
10 U.S.C. 527 note).

11 “(K) Such other locations and corresponding
12 periods as the Secretary, in collaboration with the
13 Secretary of Defense, may determine appropriate in
14 a report submitted under paragraph (2).

15 “(2) Not later than two years after the date of the
16 enactment of the Supporting Expanded Review for Vet-
17 erans In Combat Environments Act of 2021, and not less
18 frequently than once every two years thereafter, the Sec-
19 retary of Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Sec-
20 retary of Defense, shall submit to Congress a report speci-
21 fying other locations and corresponding periods for pur-
22 poses of paragraph (1)(K).

23 “(3) A location under this subsection shall not in-
24 clude any body of water around or any airspace above such
25 location.

1 “(4) In this subsection, the term ‘burn pit’ means an
2 area of land that is used for disposal of solid waste by
3 burning in the outdoor air.”.

4 (b) REPORT ON BREAST CANCER RATES FOR VET-
5 ERANS DEPLOYED TO CERTAIN AREAS.—Not later than
6 two years after the date of the enactment of this Act, the
7 Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit to the Com-
8 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and the Com-
9 mittee on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representa-
10 tives a report that compares the rates of breast cancer
11 among members of the Armed Forces deployed to the loca-
12 tions and during the periods specified in section 7322(d)
13 of title 38, United States Code, as added by subsection
14 (a), as compared to members of the Armed Forces who
15 were not deployed to those locations during those periods
16 and to the civilian population.

17 **Subtitle B—Certain Veterans of**
18 **Combat Service and Other Matters**

19 **SEC. 111. EXPANSION OF PERIOD OF ELIGIBILITY FOR**
20 **HEALTH CARE FOR CERTAIN VETERANS OF**
21 **COMBAT SERVICE.**

22 (a) EXPANDED PERIOD.—Section 1710(e)(3) is
23 amended—

24 (1) in subparagraph (A)—

1 (A) by striking “January 27, 2003” and
2 inserting “September 11, 2001”; and

3 (B) by striking “five-year period” and in-
4 sserting “10-year period”;

5 (2) by amending subparagraph (B) to read as
6 follows:

7 “(B) With respect to a veteran described in
8 paragraph (1)(D) who was discharged or released
9 from the active military, naval, air, or space service
10 after September 11, 2001, and before October 1,
11 2013, but did not enroll to receive such hospital
12 care, medical services, or nursing home care under
13 such paragraph pursuant to subparagraph (A) be-
14 fore October 1, 2022, the one-year period beginning
15 on October 1, 2022.”; and

16 (3) by striking subparagraph (C).

17 (b) CLARIFICATION OF COVERAGE.—Section
18 1710(e)(1)(D) is amended by inserting after “Persian
19 Gulf War” the following: “(including any veteran who, in
20 connection with service during such period, received the
21 Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Service Specific Ex-
22 peditionary Medal, Combat Era Specific Expeditionary
23 Medal, Campaign Specific Medal, or any other combat the-
24 ater award established by a Federal statute or an Execu-
25 tive order)”.

1 (c) OUTREACH PLAN.—Not later than December 1,
2 2022, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
3 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
4 Senate a plan to conduct outreach to veterans described
5 in subparagraph (B) of section 1710(e)(3) of title 38,
6 United States Code, as amended by subsection (a)(2), to
7 notify such veterans of their eligibility for hospital care,
8 medical services, or nursing home care pursuant to such
9 subparagraph.

10 (d) REPORT ON ENROLLMENTS.—Not later than
11 January 30, 2024, the Secretary shall submit to the Com-
12 mittees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representa-
13 tives and the Senate a report identifying, with respect to
14 the one-year period beginning on October 1, 2022, the
15 number of veterans described in section 1710(e)(3)(B) of
16 title 38, United States Code, as amended by subsection
17 (a)(2), who, during such period, enrolled in the patient
18 enrollment system of the Department of Veterans Affairs
19 established and operated under section 1705 of such title.

20 (e) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This section and the amend-
21 ments made by this section shall take effect on October
22 1, 2022.

1 **SEC. 112. AUTHORIZATION PERIOD FOR EMERGENCY**
2 **TREATMENT IN NON-DEPARTMENT OF VET-**
3 **ERANS AFFAIRS MEDICAL FACILITIES.**

4 Section 1703(a)(3) of title 38, United States Code,
5 is amended—

6 (1) by striking “A covered veteran” and insert-
7 ing “(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B),
8 a covered veteran”; and

9 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
10 paragraph:

11 “(B) In the case of an emergency which existed at
12 the time of admission of a covered veteran to a health care
13 provider, the Secretary shall deem the care or services re-
14 ceived by the veteran during such admission to be author-
15 ized under subparagraph (A) if the covered veteran (or
16 an individual acting on behalf of the covered veteran)
17 makes an application for such authorization during the pe-
18 riod following such admission that the Secretary deter-
19 mines appropriate for purposes of this paragraph, except
20 such period may not be less than 96 hours.”.

21 **TITLE II—TOXIC EXPOSURE**
22 **PRESUMPTION PROCESS**

23 **SEC. 201. SHORT TITLE.**

24 This subtitle may be cited as the “Fairly Assessing
25 Service-related Toxic Exposure Residuals Presumptions
26 Act” or the “FASTER Presumptions Act”.

1 **SEC. 202. IMPROVEMENTS TO ABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF**
2 **VETERANS AFFAIRS TO ESTABLISH PRE-**
3 **SUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION**
4 **BASED ON TOXIC EXPOSURE.**

5 (a) ADVISORY COMMITTEES, PANELS, AND
6 BOARDS.—Chapter 11 is amended by adding at the end
7 the following new subchapter:

8 “SUBCHAPTER VII—DETERMINATIONS RELAT-
9 ING TO PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CON-
10 NECTION BASED ON TOXIC EXPOSURE

11 “§ 1171. **Procedures to determine presumptions of**
12 **service connection based on toxic expo-**
13 **sure; definitions**

14 “(a) PROCEDURES.—The Secretary shall determine
15 whether to establish, or to remove, presumptions of service
16 connection based on toxic exposure pursuant to this sub-
17 chapter, whereby—

18 “(1) the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic
19 Exposure under section 1172 of this title—

20 “(A) provides advice to the Secretary on
21 toxic-exposed veterans and cases in which vet-
22 erans who, during active military, naval, air, or
23 space service, may have experienced a toxic ex-
24 posure or their dependents may have experi-
25 enced a toxic exposure while the veterans were

1 serving in the active military, naval, air, or
2 space service;

3 “(B) provides to the Secretary rec-
4 ommendations on corrections needed in the In-
5 dividual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or suc-
6 cessor system, to better reflect veterans and de-
7 pendents described in subparagraph (A); and

8 “(C) provides to the Secretary rec-
9 ommendations regarding which cases of possible
10 toxic exposure should be reviewed; and

11 “(2) the Secretary provides for formal evalua-
12 tions of such recommendations under section 1173
13 of this title; and

14 “(3) the Secretary issues regulations under sec-
15 tion 1174 of this title.

16 “(b) ILLNESS DEFINED.—In this subchapter, the
17 term ‘illness’ includes a disease or other condition affect-
18 ing the health of an individual, including mental and phys-
19 ical health.

20 **“§ 1172. Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Expo-**
21 **sure**

22 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) There is in the Veterans
23 Health Administration of the Department the Formal Ad-
24 visory Committee on Toxic Exposure (in this section re-
25 ferred to as the ‘Committee’).

1 “(2)(A) The Committee shall be composed of nine
2 members appointed as follows:

3 “(i) Five members shall be appointed by the
4 Secretary.

5 “(ii) One member shall be appointed by the
6 Speaker of the House of Representatives.

7 “(iii) One member shall be appointed by the mi-
8 nority leader of the House of Representatives.

9 “(iv) One member shall be appointed by the
10 majority leader of the Senate.

11 “(v) One member shall be appointed by the mi-
12 nority leader of the Senate.

13 “(B) The members appointed under subparagraph
14 (A) shall meet the following criteria:

15 “(i) Not more than three members shall be ap-
16 pointed from among individuals who are officials or
17 employees of the Veterans Benefits Administration
18 or the Veterans Health Administration.

19 “(ii) At least one member shall be appointed
20 from among individuals who are officials or employ-
21 ees of other departments or agencies of the Federal
22 Government, including the Department of Defense
23 and the Agency of Toxic Substances and Disease
24 Registry of the Centers for Disease Control and Pre-
25 vention.

1 “(iii) At least two members shall represent an
2 organization recognized by the Secretary for the rep-
3 resentation of veterans under section 5902 of this
4 title.

5 “(iv) At least one member shall be appointed
6 from among individuals in the private sector, State
7 or local government, or academia, who are experts in
8 toxicology and epidemiology.

9 “(3) The Secretary shall determine the pay and al-
10 lowances of the members of the Committee, including with
11 respect to any additional pay and allowances for members
12 who are officials or employees of the Federal Government.

13 “(4)(A) Except as provided by subparagraph (B),
14 each member of the Committee shall be appointed for a
15 two-year term, and may serve not more than three succes-
16 sive terms.

17 “(B) With respect to the five members who are ini-
18 tially appointed by the Secretary under subparagraph
19 (A)(i), the Secretary shall determine the length of the
20 term of each such member in a manner that ensures the
21 expiration of the terms on a staggered basis.

22 “(5) A vacancy in the Committee shall be filled in
23 the manner in which the original appointment was made.

24 “(b) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary may consult
25 with, and seek the advice of, the Committee with respect

1 to cases in which veterans who, during active military,
2 naval, air, or space service, are suspected of having experi-
3 enced a toxic exposure or dependents of veterans who may
4 have experienced a toxic exposure during such service.

5 “(c) ASSESSMENTS.—(1) The Committee shall assess
6 cases of the toxic exposure of veterans and their depend-
7 ents that occurred during active military, naval, air, or
8 space service, including by conducting ongoing surveillance
9 and reviewing such exposure described in scientific lit-
10 erature, media reports, information from veterans, and in-
11 formation from Congress.

12 “(2) The assessments under paragraph (1) shall
13 cover suspected and known toxic exposures occurring dur-
14 ing active military, naval, air, or space service, including
15 by identifying and evaluating new and emerging toxic ex-
16 posures that are not recognized under existing presump-
17 tions of service connection.

18 “(3) The Committee may conduct an assessment
19 under paragraph (1) in response to comments by a person
20 described in subsection (e)(2), by a majority vote of the
21 members of the Committee.

22 “(4) The Committee shall on a periodic basis assess
23 the Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor
24 system, to ensure the accuracy of data collected.

1 “(d) RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS.—(1) Following
2 an assessment of a case of the toxic exposure of veterans
3 or their dependents that occurred during active military,
4 naval, air, or space service under subsection (c), the Com-
5 mittee may develop a recommendation for formal evalua-
6 tion under section 1173 of this title to conduct a review
7 of the health effects related to the case of exposure if the
8 Committee determines that the research may change the
9 current understanding of the relationship between an ex-
10 posure to an environmental hazard and adverse health
11 outcomes in humans.

12 “(2) Upon receipt of evidence suggesting that pre-
13 vious findings regarding the periods and locations of expo-
14 sure covered by an existing presumption of service connec-
15 tion are no longer supported, the Committee may nomi-
16 nate such evidence for formal evaluation under section
17 1173 of this title to modify the periods and locations.

18 “(e) INPUT.—(1) Not less than quarterly, the Com-
19 mittee shall provide an opportunity for persons described
20 in paragraph (2) to present written or oral comments to
21 the Committee.

22 “(2) The persons described in this paragraph are per-
23 sons who may be affected by the actions of the Committee,
24 including—

1 “(A) veterans, the families of veterans, veterans
2 service organizations and representatives, research-
3 ers, and other members of the general public; and

4 “(B) departments and agencies of the Federal
5 Government.

6 “(f) REPORTS BY THE COMMITTEE.—Not less fre-
7 quently than once each year, the Committee shall submit
8 to the Secretary and the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs
9 of the Senate and the House of Representatives, and make
10 publicly available, a report on—

11 “(1) recommendations for research under sub-
12 section (d), if any; and

13 “(2) recommendations for such legislative or
14 administrative action as the Committee considers
15 necessary for the Committee to be more effective in
16 carrying out the requirements of this section.

17 “(g) RESPONSES BY SECRETARY.—In response to
18 each report submitted under subsection (f), the Secretary
19 shall submit to the Secretary and the Committees on Vet-
20 erans’ Affairs of the Senate and the House of Representa-
21 tives, and make publicly available, a report on—

22 “(1) the findings and opinions of the Secretary
23 with respect to the report most recently submitted
24 under subsection (f); and

1 “(2) whether the Secretary will conduct re-
2 search recommended under subsection (f) included
3 in the report, and if not, an explanation of why, in-
4 cluding citations and sources.

5 “(h) NONAPPLICATION OF SUNSET REQUIRE-
6 MENTS.—Section 14 of the Federal Advisory Committee
7 Act (5 U.S.C. App.) shall not apply to the Committee.

8 **“§ 1173. Formal evaluation of recommendations**

9 “(a) FORMAL EVALUATION.—The Secretary shall es-
10 tablish a process to conduct a formal evaluation with re-
11 spect to each recommendation made by the Formal Advi-
12 sory Committee on Toxic Exposure under section 1172 of
13 this title—

14 “(1) to conduct research regarding the health
15 effects related to a case of toxic exposure; or

16 “(2) to evaluate evidence regarding the periods
17 and locations of exposure covered by an existing pre-
18 sumption of service connection.

19 “(b) EVIDENCE, DATA, AND FACTORS.—The Sec-
20 retary shall ensure that each formal evaluation under
21 paragraph (1) covers the following:

22 “(1) Scientific evidence, based on the review of
23 available scientific literature, including human, toxi-
24 cological, animal, and methodological studies, and
25 other factors.

1 “(2) Claims data, based on the review of claim
2 rate, grant rate, and service connection prevalence,
3 and other factors.

4 “(3) Other factors the Secretary determines ap-
5 propriate, such as—

6 “(A) the level of disability and mortality
7 caused by the health effects related to the case
8 of toxic exposure being evaluated;

9 “(B) the level of assistance required to re-
10 main in the community because of such health
11 effects;

12 “(C) the quantity and quality of the infor-
13 mation available and reviewed;

14 “(D) the feasibility of and period for gen-
15 erating relevant information and evidence;

16 “(E) whether such health effects are
17 combat- or deployment-related; and

18 “(F) the ubiquity or rarity of the health
19 effects.

20 “(c) CONDUCT OF EVALUATIONS.—(1) The Secretary
21 shall ensure that each formal evaluation under subsection
22 (a)—

23 “(A) reviews scientific evidence in a manner
24 that—

1 “(i) conforms to principles of scientific and
2 data integrity;

3 “(ii) is free from suppression or distortion
4 of scientific or technological findings, data, in-
5 formation, conclusions, or technical results; and

6 “(B)(i) evaluates the likelihood that a positive
7 association exists between an illness and a toxic ex-
8 posure while serving in the active military, naval,
9 air, or space service; and

10 “(ii) assesses the toxic exposures and illnesses
11 and determines whether the evidence supports a
12 finding of a positive association between the toxic
13 exposure and the illness.

14 “(2) In carrying out paragraph (1)(B)(ii), a formal
15 evaluation under subsection (a) shall include reviewing all
16 relevant data to determine the strength of evidence for a
17 positive association based on the following four categories:

18 “(A) The ‘sufficient’ category, where the evi-
19 dence is sufficient to conclude that a positive asso-
20 ciation exists.

21 “(B) The ‘equipoise and above’ category, where
22 the evidence is sufficient to conclude that a positive
23 association is at least as likely as not, but not suffi-
24 cient to conclude that a positive association exists.

1 5 of title 5 (commonly referred to as the Administra-
2 tive Procedures Act) setting forth the presumption
3 or commence revising regulations to carry out such
4 modification; or

5 “(2) if the Secretary determines that the pre-
6 sumption, or modification, is not warranted, the Sec-
7 retary shall publish in the Federal Register a notice
8 of the determination, including the reasons sup-
9 porting the determination.

10 “(b) REMOVAL OF PRESUMPTION.—(1) The Sec-
11 retary may issue regulations to remove an illness from a
12 presumption of service connection previously established
13 pursuant to a regulation issued under subsection (a).

14 “(2) Whenever an illness is removed from regulations
15 pursuant to paragraph (1), or the periods and locations
16 of exposure covered by a presumption of service connection
17 are modified under subsection (a)—

18 “(A) a veteran who was awarded compensation
19 for such illness on the basis of the presumption pro-
20 vided under such regulations before the effective
21 date of the removal or modification shall continue to
22 be entitled to receive compensation on that basis;
23 and

24 “(B) a survivor of a veteran who was awarded
25 dependency and indemnity compensation for the

1 death of a veteran resulting from such illness on the
2 basis of such presumption shall continue to be enti-
3 tled to receive dependency and indemnity compensa-
4 tion on such basis.

5 **“§ 1175. Authority to modify process; congressional**
6 **oversight**

7 “(a) AUTHORITY.—(1) The Secretary may modify the
8 process under which the Secretary conducts formal evalua-
9 tions under section 1173 of this title and issues regula-
10 tions under section 1174 if—

11 “(A) such evaluations cover the evidence, data,
12 and factors required by subsection (b) of such sec-
13 tion 1173; and

14 “(B) a period of 180 days has elapsed following
15 the date on which the Secretary submits the notice
16 under paragraph (2) regarding the modification.

17 “(2) If the Secretary proposes to modify the process
18 under which the Secretary conducts formal evaluations
19 under section 1173 of this title or issues regulations under
20 section 1174, the Secretary shall submit to the Commit-
21 tees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives
22 and the Senate a notice of the proposed modifications con-
23 taining the following:

24 “(A) A description of the proposed modifica-
25 tions.

1 “(B) A description of any exceptions to the re-
2 quirements of such sections that are proposed be-
3 cause of limited available scientific evidence, and a
4 description of how such evaluations will be con-
5 ducted.

6 “(b) REPORTS AND BRIEFINGS.—(1)(A) Not later
7 than two years after the date of the enactment of the Hon-
8 oring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act
9 of 2021, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
10 Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
11 Senate a report on the implementation of, and rec-
12 ommendations for, this subchapter.

13 “(B) The Secretary shall develop the report under
14 subparagraph (A) in consultation with organizations rec-
15 ognized by the Secretary for the representation of veterans
16 under section 5902 of this title and any other entity the
17 Secretary determines appropriate.

18 “(2) On a quarterly basis during the two-year period
19 beginning on the date of the enactment of the Honoring
20 our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of
21 2021, the Secretary shall provide to the Committees on
22 Veterans’ Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
23 Senate a briefing on the implementation of this sub-
24 chapter.

1 “(c) INDEPENDENT REVIEW.—The Secretary shall
2 seek to enter into an agreement with a nongovernmental
3 entity or a federally funded research and development cen-
4 ter to conduct a review of the implementation of this sub-
5 chapter. Not later than 540 days after the date of the
6 enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Address Com-
7 prehensive Toxics Act of 2021, the Secretary shall submit
8 to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the House of
9 Representatives and the Senate a report containing such
10 review.”.

11 (b) CONFORMING AMENDMENTS.—Chapter 11 is
12 amended—

13 (1) in section 1116—

14 (A) by striking subsections (b), (c), (d),
15 and (e);

16 (B) by inserting after subsection (a) the
17 following new subsection (b):

18 “(b) The Secretary shall ensure that any determina-
19 tion made on or after the date of the enactment of the
20 Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics
21 Act of 2021 regarding a presumption of service connection
22 based on exposure to an herbicide agent under this section
23 is made pursuant to subchapter VII of this chapter, in-
24 cluding with respect to assessing reports received by the
25 Secretary from the National Academy of Sciences under

1 section 3 of the Agent Orange Act of 1991 (Public Law
2 102–4).”; and

3 (C) by redesignating subsection (f) as sub-
4 section (e);

5 (2) in section 1116B(b)(2)(A), by inserting
6 “pursuant to subchapter VII of this chapter,” before
7 “the Secretary determines”; and

8 (3) in section 1118—

9 (A) by striking subsections (b) through (e);

10 and

11 (B) by inserting after subsection (a) the
12 following new subsection (b):

13 “(b) The Secretary shall ensure that any determina-
14 tion made on or after the date of the enactment of the
15 Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics
16 Act of 2021 regarding a presumption of service connection
17 based on a toxic exposure under this section is made pur-
18 suant to subchapter VII of this chapter.”.

19 (c) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in section
20 1172(a)(2)(A) of title 38, United States Code, as added
21 by subsection (a), shall be construed so as to require the
22 advice and consent of the Senate in the appointment of
23 members of the Formal Advisory Committee on Toxic Ex-
24 posure.

1 **SEC. 203. REEVALUATION OF CLAIMS FOR COMPENSATION**
2 **INVOLVING PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE**
3 **CONNECTION.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter VI of chapter 11 is
5 amended by adding at the end the following new section:

6 **“§ 1167. Reevaluation of compensation determina-**
7 **tions pursuant to changes in presump-**
8 **tions of service connection**

9 “(a) REEVALUATION.—Whenever a law, including
10 through a regulation or Federal court decision, establishes
11 or modifies a presumption of service connection, the Sec-
12 retary shall—

13 “(1) identify all claims for compensation under
14 this chapter that—

15 “(A) were submitted to the Secretary;

16 “(B) were evaluated and denied by the
17 Secretary before the date on which such provi-
18 sion of law went into effect; and

19 “(C) might have been evaluated differently
20 had the establishment or modification been ap-
21 plicable to the claim;

22 “(2) allow for the reevaluation of such claims at
23 the election of the veteran; and

24 “(3) notwithstanding section 5110 of this title,
25 with respect to claims approved pursuant to such re-
26 evaluation, provide compensation under this chapter

1 effective as if the establishment or modification of
2 the presumption of service connection had been in
3 effect on the date of the submission of the original
4 claim described in paragraph (1).

5 “(b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall conduct out-
6 reach to inform relevant veterans that they may elect to
7 have a claim be reevaluated in light of the establishment
8 or modification of a presumption of service connection de-
9 scribed in subsection (a). Such outreach shall include the
10 following:

11 “(1) The Secretary shall publish on the internet
12 website of the Department a notice that such vet-
13 erans may elect to have a claim so reevaluated.

14 “(2) The Secretary shall notify, in writing or by
15 electronic means, veterans service organizations of
16 the ability of such veterans to elect to have a claim
17 so reevaluated.”.

18 (b) APPLICATION.—Section 1167 of title 38, United
19 States Code, as added by subsection (a), shall apply with
20 respect to presumptions of service connection established
21 or modified on or after the date of the enactment of this
22 Act, including pursuant to amendments made by this Act.

1 **TITLE III—IMPROVING THE ES-**
2 **TABLISHMENT OF SERVICE**
3 **CONNECTION PROCESS FOR**
4 **TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS**

5 **SEC. 301. SHORT TITLE.**

6 This title may be cited as the “Veterans Burn Pits
7 Exposure Recognition Act”.

8 **SEC. 302. PRESUMPTIONS OF TOXIC EXPOSURE.**

9 Subchapter II of chapter 11 is amended by adding
10 at the end the following new section:

11 **“§ 1119. Presumptions of toxic exposure**

12 “(a) CONSIDERATION OF RECORDS.—If a veteran
13 submits to the Secretary a claim for compensation for a
14 service-connected disability under section 1110 of this title
15 with evidence of a disability and a toxic exposure that oc-
16 curred during active military, naval, air, or space service,
17 the Secretary may, in adjudicating such claim, consider—

18 “(1) any record of the veteran in an exposure
19 tracking record system; and

20 “(2) if no record of the veteran in an exposure
21 tracking record system indicates that the veteran
22 was subject to a toxic exposure during active mili-
23 tary, naval, air, or space service, the totality of the
24 circumstances of the service of the veteran.

1 “(b) PRESUMPTION OF SPECIFIC TOXIC EXPOSURE
2 FOR MEMBERS WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.—

3 (1) The Secretary shall, for purposes of section 1110 and
4 chapter 17 of this title, presume that any covered veteran
5 was exposed to the substances, chemicals, and airborne
6 hazards identified in the list under paragraph (2) during
7 the service of the covered veteran specified in subsection
8 (c)(1), unless there is affirmative evidence to establish
9 that the covered veteran was not exposed to any such sub-
10 stances, chemicals, or hazards in connection with such
11 service.

12 “(2) The Secretary shall establish and maintain a list
13 that contains an identification of one or more such sub-
14 stances, chemicals, and airborne hazards as the Secretary,
15 in collaboration with the Secretary of Defense, may deter-
16 mine appropriate for purposes of this section.

17 “(3) Beginning not later than two years after the
18 date of the enactment of the Honoring our Promise to Ad-
19 dress Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2021, and not less fre-
20 quently than once every two years thereafter, the Sec-
21 retary shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs
22 of the House of Representatives and the Senate a report
23 identifying any additions or removals to the list under
24 paragraph (2) during the period covered by the report.

25 “(c) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 “(1) The term ‘covered veteran’ means any vet-
2 eran who—

3 “(A) on or after August 2, 1990, per-
4 formed active military, naval, air, or space serv-
5 ice while assigned to a duty station in—

6 “(i) Bahrain;

7 “(ii) Iraq;

8 “(iii) Kuwait;

9 “(iv) Oman;

10 “(v) Qatar;

11 “(vi) Saudi Arabia;

12 “(vii) Somalia; or

13 “(viii) United Arab Emirates; or

14 “(B) on or after September 11, 2001, per-
15 formed active military, naval, air, or space serv-
16 ice while assigned to a duty station in—

17 “(i) Afghanistan;

18 “(ii) Djibouti;

19 “(iii) Egypt;

20 “(iv) Jordan;

21 “(v) Lebanon;

22 “(vi) Syria;

23 “(vii) Yemen;

24 “(viii) Uzbekistan;

25 “(ix) the Philippines; or

1 “(x) any other country determined rel-
2 evant by the Secretary.

3 “(2) The term ‘exposure tracking record sys-
4 tem’—

5 “(A) means any system, program, or pilot
6 program used by the Secretary of Veterans Af-
7 fairs or the Secretary of Defense to track how
8 veterans or members of the Armed Forces have
9 been exposed to various occupational or envi-
10 ronmental hazards; and

11 “(B) includes the Individual Longitudinal
12 Exposure Record, or successor system.

13 “(3) The term ‘toxic exposure risk activity’ has
14 the meaning given such term in section 1710(e)(4)
15 of this title.”.

16 **SEC. 303. MEDICAL NEXUS EXAMINATIONS FOR TOXIC EX-**
17 **POSURE RISK ACTIVITIES.**

18 Subchapter VI of chapter 11, as amended by section
19 203, is further amended by adding at the end the following
20 new section:

21 **“§ 1168. Medical nexus examinations for toxic expo-**
22 **sure risk activities**

23 “(a) MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND MEDICAL OPIN-
24 IONS.—(1) Except as provided in subsection (b), if a vet-
25 eran submits to the Secretary a claim for compensation

1 for a service-connected disability under section 1110 of
2 this title with evidence of a disability and evidence of par-
3 ticipation in a toxic exposure risk activity during active
4 military, naval, air, or space service, and such evidence
5 is not sufficient to establish a service connection for the
6 disability, the Secretary shall—

7 “(A) provide the veteran with a medical exam-
8 ination under section 5103A(d) of this title; and

9 “(B) obtain a medical opinion (to be requested
10 by the Secretary in connection with the medical ex-
11 amination under subparagraph (A)) as to whether it
12 is at least as likely as not that there is a nexus be-
13 tween the disability and the toxic exposure risk ac-
14 tivity.

15 “(2) When providing the Secretary with a medical
16 opinion under paragraph (1)(B) for a veteran, the health
17 care provider shall consider—

18 “(A) the total potential exposure through all
19 applicable military deployments of the veteran; and

20 “(B) the synergistic, combined effect of all toxic
21 exposure risk activities of the veteran.

22 “(3) The requirement under paragraph (2)(B) shall
23 not be construed as requiring a health care provider to
24 consider the synergistic, combined effect of each of the

1 substances, chemicals, and airborne hazards identified in
 2 the list under section 1119(b)(2) of this title.

3 “(b) EXCEPTION.—Subsection (a) shall not apply if
 4 the Secretary determines there is no indication of an asso-
 5 ciation between the disability claimed by the veteran and
 6 the toxic exposure risk activity for which the veteran sub-
 7 mitted evidence.

8 “(c) TOXIC EXPOSURE RISK ACTIVITY DEFINED.—
 9 In this section, the term ‘toxic exposure risk activity’ has
 10 the meaning given that term in section 1710(e)(4) of this
 11 title.”.

12 **TITLE IV—PRESUMPTIONS OF** 13 **SERVICE CONNECTION**

14 **SEC. 401. TREATMENT OF VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED** 15 **IN CLEANUP OF ENEWETAK ATOLL AS RADI-** 16 **ATION-EXPOSED VETERANS FOR PURPOSES** 17 **OF PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION** 18 **OF CERTAIN DISABILITIES BY DEPARTMENT** 19 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

20 (a) SHORT TITLE.—This section may be cited as the
 21 “Mark Takai Atomic Veterans Healthcare Parity Act”.

22 (b) ENEWETAK ATOLL.—Section 1112(c)(3)(B) is
 23 amended by adding at the end the following new clause:

1 “(v) Cleanup of Enewetak Atoll during the
2 period beginning on January 1, 1977, and end-
3 ing on December 31, 1980.”.

4 **SEC. 402. TREATMENT OF VETERANS WHO PARTICIPATED**
5 **IN NUCLEAR RESPONSE NEAR PALOMARES,**
6 **SPAIN, OR THULE, GREENLAND, AS RADI-**
7 **ATION-EXPOSED VETERANS FOR PURPOSES**
8 **OF PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION**
9 **OF CERTAIN DISABILITIES BY DEPARTMENT**
10 **OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

11 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
12 “Palomares or Thule Veterans Act”

13 (b) **PALOMARES OR THULE.**—Section 1112(c)(3)(B),
14 as amended by section 401, is further amended by adding
15 at the end the following new clauses:

16 “(vi) Onsite participation in the response
17 effort following the collision of a United States
18 Air Force B-52 bomber and refueling plane
19 that caused the release of four thermonuclear
20 weapons in the vicinity of Palomares, Spain,
21 during the period beginning January 17, 1966,
22 and ending March 31, 1967.

23 “(vii) Onsite participation in the response
24 effort following the on-board fire and crash of
25 a United States Air Force B-52 bomber that

1 caused the release of four thermonuclear weap-
2 ons in the vicinity of Thule Air Force Base,
3 Greenland, during the period beginning Janu-
4 ary 21, 1968, and ending September 25,
5 1968.”.

6 **SEC. 403. PRESUMPTIONS OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR**
7 **DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPOSURES TO**
8 **CERTAIN HERBICIDE AGENTS FOR VETERANS**
9 **WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCATIONS.**

10 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
11 “Veterans Agent Orange Exposure Equity Act”.

12 (b) **IN GENERAL.**—Section 1116, as amended by sec-
13 tion 202, is further amended—

14 (1) by striking “, during active military, naval,
15 air, or space service, served in the Republic of Viet-
16 nam during the period beginning on January 9,
17 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975” each place it ap-
18 pears and inserting “performed covered service”;

19 (2) by striking “performed active military,
20 naval, air, or space service in the Republic of Viet-
21 nam during the period beginning on January 9,
22 1962, and ending on May 7, 1975” each place it ap-
23 pears and inserting “performed covered service”;
24 and

1 (3) by adding at the end the following new sub-
2 section:

3 “(d) In this section, the term ‘covered service’ means
4 active military, naval, air, or space service—

5 “(1) performed in the Republic of Vietnam dur-
6 ing the period beginning on January 9, 1962, and
7 ending on May 7, 1975;

8 “(2) performed in Thailand at any United
9 States or Royal Thai base during the period begin-
10 ning on January 9, 1962, and ending on June 30,
11 1976, without regard to where on the base the vet-
12 eran was located or what military job specialty the
13 veteran performed;

14 “(3) performed in Laos during the period be-
15 ginning on December 1, 1965, and ending on Sep-
16 tember 30, 1969;

17 “(4) performed in Cambodia at Mimot or Krek,
18 Kampong Cham Province during the period begin-
19 ning on April 16, 1969, and ending on April 30,
20 1969; or

21 “(5) performed on Guam or American Samoa,
22 or in the territorial waters thereof, during the period
23 beginning on January 9, 1962, and ending on July
24 31, 1980, or served on Johnston Atoll or on a ship
25 that called at Johnston Atoll during the period be-

1 ginning on January 1, 1972, and ending on Sep-
2 tember 30, 1977.”.

3 (c) ELIGIBILITY FOR HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL
4 SERVICES.—Section 1710(e)(4), as amended by section
5 102(c), is further amended by striking subparagraph (A)
6 and inserting the following new subparagraph:

7 “(A) The term ‘Vietnam-era herbicide-exposed
8 veteran’ means a veteran who—

9 “(i) performed covered service, as defined
10 in section 1116(d) of this title; or

11 “(ii) the Secretary finds may have been ex-
12 posed during such service to dioxin or was ex-
13 posed during such service to a toxic substance
14 found in a herbicide or defoliant used for mili-
15 tary purposes during such period.”.

16 (d) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—The heading for
17 section 1116 is amended by striking “**the Republic of**
18 **Vietnam**” and inserting “**certain locations**”.

1 **SEC. 404. ADDITION OF ADDITIONAL DISEASES ASSOCI-**
2 **ATED WITH EXPOSURE TO CERTAIN HERBI-**
3 **CIDE AGENTS FOR WHICH THERE IS A PRE-**
4 **SUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR**
5 **VETERANS WHO SERVED IN CERTAIN LOCA-**
6 **TIONS.**

7 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
8 “Fair Care for Vietnam Veterans Act”.

9 (b) **ADDITIONAL DISEASES.**—Section 1116(a)(2), as
10 amended by section 9109 of the William M. (Mac) Thorn-
11 berry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year
12 2021 (Public Law 116–283), is further amended by add-
13 ing at the end the following new subparagraphs:

14 “(L) Hypertension.

15 “(M) Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined
16 significance.”.

17 **SEC. 405. IMPROVING COMPENSATION FOR DISABILITIES**
18 **OCCURRING IN PERSIAN GULF WAR VET-**
19 **ERANS.**

20 (a) **REDUCTION IN THRESHOLD OF ELIGIBILITY.**—
21 Subsection (a)(1) of section 1117 is amended by striking
22 “became manifest—” and all that follows through the pe-
23 riod at the end and inserting “became manifest to any
24 degree at any time.”.

25 (b) **PERMANENT EXTENSION OF PERIOD OF ELIGI-**
26 **BILITY.**—Such section is further amended—

1 (1) by striking subsection (b);

2 (2) by redesignating subsections (c) and (d) as
3 subsections (b) and (c), respectively; and

4 (3) in subsection (a)(2)(C), by striking “under
5 subsection (d)” and inserting “under subsection
6 (c)”.

7 (c) ESTABLISHING SINGULAR DISABILITY-BASED
8 QUESTIONNAIRE.—Such section is further amended by in-
9 serting after subsection (c) (as redesignated by subsection
10 (b)) the following new subsection (d):

11 “(d) If a Persian Gulf veteran at a medical facility
12 of the Department presents with any one symptom associ-
13 ated with Gulf War Illness, the Secretary shall ensure that
14 health care personnel of the Department use a disability
15 benefits questionnaire, or successor questionnaire, de-
16 signed to identify Gulf War Illness, in addition to any
17 other diagnostic actions the personnel determine appro-
18 priate.”.

19 (d) EXPANSION OF DEFINITION OF PERSIAN GULF
20 VETERAN.—Subsection (f) of such section is amended by
21 inserting “, Afghanistan, Israel, Egypt, Turkey, Syria, or
22 Jordan,” after “operations”.

23 (e) TRAINING.—Such section is further amended by
24 adding at the end the following new subsection:

1 “(i)(1) The Secretary shall take such actions as may
2 be necessary to ensure that health care personnel of the
3 Department are appropriately trained to effectively carry
4 out this section.

5 “(2) Not less frequently than once each year, the Sec-
6 retary shall submit to Congress a report on the actions
7 taken by the Secretary to carry out paragraph (1).”.

8 **SEC. 406. PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION FOR**
9 **CERTAIN DISEASES ASSOCIATED WITH EXPO-**
10 **SURE TO BURN PITS AND OTHER TOXINS.**

11 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
12 “Presumptive Benefits for War Fighters Exposed to Burn
13 Pits and Other Toxins Act”.

14 (b) **IN GENERAL.**—Subchapter II of chapter 11, as
15 amended by section 302, is further amended by inserting
16 after section 1119 the following new section:

17 **“§ 1120. Presumption of service connection for cer-**
18 **tain diseases associated with exposure to**
19 **burn pits and other toxins**

20 “(a) **PRESUMPTION OF SERVICE CONNECTION.**—For
21 the purposes of section 1110 of this title, and subject to
22 section 1113 of this title, a disease specified in subsection
23 (b) becoming manifest in a covered veteran shall be con-
24 sidered to have been incurred in or aggravated during ac-
25 tive military, naval, air, or space service, notwithstanding

1 that there is no record of evidence of such disease during
2 the period of such service.

3 “(b) DISEASES SPECIFIED.—The diseases specified
4 in this subsection are the following:

5 “(1) Asthma that was diagnosed after service of
6 the covered veteran as specified in subsection (c).

7 “(2) The following types of cancer:

8 “(A) Head cancer of any type.

9 “(B) Neck cancer of any type.

10 “(C) Respiratory cancer of any type.

11 “(D) Gastrointestinal cancer of any type.

12 “(E) Reproductive cancer of any type.

13 “(F) Lymphoma cancer of any type.

14 “(G) Lymphomatic cancer of any type.

15 “(H) Kidney cancer.

16 “(I) Brain cancer.

17 “(J) Melanoma.

18 “(K) Pancreatic cancer.

19 “(3) Chronic bronchitis.

20 “(4) Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

21 “(5) Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative
22 bronchiolitis.

23 “(6) Emphysema.

24 “(7) Granulomatous disease.

25 “(8) Interstitial lung disease.

1 “(9) Pleuritis.

2 “(10) Pulmonary fibrosis.

3 “(11) Sarcoidosis.

4 “(12) Chronic sinusitis.

5 “(13) Chronic rhinitis.

6 “(14) Glioblastoma.

7 “(15) Any other disease for which the Secretary
8 determines, pursuant to regulations prescribed under
9 subchapter VII that a presumption of service con-
10 nection is warranted based on a positive association
11 with a substance, chemical, or airborne hazard iden-
12 tified in the list under section 1119(b)(2) of this
13 title.

14 “(c) COVERED VETERAN DEFINED.—In this section,
15 the term ‘covered veteran’ has the meaning given that
16 term in section 1119(c) of this title.”.

17 (c) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Section 1113 is
18 amended by striking “or 1118” each place it appears and
19 inserting “1118, or 1120”.

20 **TITLE V—RESEARCH MATTERS**

21 **SEC. 501. INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON TOXIC EXPO-** 22 **SURE RESEARCH.**

23 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter II of chapter 73 of
24 title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the
25 end the following new section:

1 **“§ 7330D. Interagency working group on toxic expo-**
2 **sure research**

3 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—(1) The Secretary shall es-
4 tablish the Toxic Exposure Research Working Group (in
5 this section referred to as the ‘Working Group’).

6 “(2) The Working Group shall consist of employees,
7 selected by the Secretary, of the following:

8 “(A) The Department.

9 “(B) The Department of Defense.

10 “(C) The Department of Health and Human
11 Services.

12 “(D) The Environmental Protection Agency.

13 “(E) Other Federal entities involved in research
14 activities regarding the health consequences of toxic
15 exposures experienced during active military, naval,
16 air, or space service.

17 “(b) FUNCTIONS.—The Working Group shall per-
18 form the following functions:

19 “(1) Identify collaborative research activities
20 and resources available among entities represented
21 by members of the Working Group to conduct such
22 collaborative research activities.

23 “(2) Develop a 5-year strategic plan for Federal
24 entities represented in the Working Group to carry
25 out collaborative research activities.

1 “(c) REPORTING.—The Secretary shall submit, to the
2 Committees on Veterans’ Affairs of the Senate and House
3 of Representatives, the following:

4 “(1) Not later than one year after the date of
5 the enactment of the Act, a report on the establish-
6 ment of the Working Group under subsection (a).

7 “(2) Not later than two years after the date of
8 enactment of the Act, a report containing the col-
9 laborative research activities identified, and the
10 Strategic Plan developed, by the Working Group,
11 under subsection (b).

12 “(3) Annually during the 5-year period covered
13 by the strategic plan under subsection (b), a
14 progress reports on implementation of the Strategic
15 Plan under subsection (b).

16 “(d) TERMINATION.—The Working Group shall ter-
17 minate after submitting the final report under subsection
18 (c).

19 “(e) DEFINITIONS.—For purposes of this section—

20 “(1) The term ‘Act’ means the Honoring our
21 Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of
22 2021.

23 “(2) The term ‘collaborative research activity’
24 means a research activity—

1 tion 1710(a)(2)(F) of title 38, United States Code,
2 as amended by section 102; and

3 (2) is likely to be scientifically useful, as deter-
4 mined by the Secretary, in determining whether a
5 positive association exists between the illness of the
6 veteran and a toxic exposure.

7 (b) CONSENT OF PATIENTS.—The Secretary shall en-
8 sure that the compilation and analysis of the clinical data
9 of a veteran under subsection (a) shall be conducted, and
10 such data shall be used, in a manner that is consistent
11 with the informed consent of the veteran and in compli-
12 ance with all applicable Federal law.

13 (c) ANNUAL REPORT.—Not later than one year after
14 the date of the enactment of this Act, and annually there-
15 after, the Secretary shall submit to the Committees on
16 Veterans' Affairs of the House of Representatives and the
17 Senate a report containing—

18 (1) any data compiled under subsection (a);

19 (2) an analysis of any such data;

20 (3) a description of the types and incidences of
21 illnesses identified by the Secretary pursuant to such
22 subsection;

23 (4) an explanation by the Secretary for the inci-
24 dence of such illnesses and such alternate expla-

1 nations for the incidence of such illnesses as the Sec-
2 retary may consider reasonable; and

3 (5) a description of the views of the Secretary
4 regarding the scientific validity of drawing conclu-
5 sions from the incidence of such illnesses, as evi-
6 denced by the data compiled under subsection (a),
7 regarding the existence of a positive association be-
8 tween such illness and a toxic exposure.

9 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

10 (1) The term “toxic exposure” has the meaning
11 given that term in section 101 of title 38, United
12 States Code.

13 (2) The term “illness” has the meaning given
14 that term in section 1171 of such title, as added by
15 section 202.

16 **SEC. 503. STUDIES RELATED TO VETERANS WHO SERVED IN**
17 **SOUTHWEST ASIA AND CERTAIN OTHER LO-**
18 **CATIONS.**

19 (a) ANALYSIS ON MORTALITY IN COVERED VET-
20 ERANS.—

21 (1) ANALYSIS.—Not later than 180 days after
22 the date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
23 of Veterans Affairs shall conduct an updated anal-
24 ysis of total and respiratory disease mortality in cov-
25 ered veterans.

1 (2) ELEMENTS.—The analysis under paragraph
2 (1) shall include, to the extent practicable, the fol-
3 lowing:

4 (A) Metrics of airborne exposures.

5 (B) The location and timing of any deploy-
6 ments of the veteran.

7 (C) The military occupational specialty of
8 the veteran.

9 (D) The Armed Force in which the veteran
10 served.

11 (E) The preexisting health status of the
12 veteran, including with respect to asthma.

13 (F) Such personal information of the vet-
14 eran as the Secretary may consider relevant, in-
15 cluding cigarette and e-cigarette smoking his-
16 tory, diet, sex, gender, age, race, and ethnicity.

17 (b) EPIDEMIOLOGICAL STUDY.—Not later than 180
18 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
19 retary shall conduct an epidemiological study of covered
20 veterans that involves—

21 (1) the use of improved spatio-temporal esti-
22 mates of ambient air pollution exposures that lever-
23 age advances in retrospective exposure assessment;
24 and

1 (2) the collection of detailed information on the
2 covered veterans studied through medical records,
3 administrative data, and other existing sources, in-
4 cluding, with respect to the covered veterans—

5 (A) personal information, including ciga-
6 rette and e-cigarette smoking history, diet, sex,
7 gender, age, race, and ethnicity;

8 (B) deployment history, including loca-
9 tions, periods, and number of deployments;

10 (C) biospecimen data; and

11 (D) supplementary health status and out-
12 comes data, including imaging and physiological
13 parameters.

14 (c) TOXICOLOGY STUDY.—

15 (1) STUDY.—Not later than 180 days after the
16 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary
17 shall conduct a toxicology study, to include varia-
18 bility, to replicate toxic exposures of healthy, young
19 members of the Armed Forces, as well as potentially
20 susceptible members, with preexisting health condi-
21 tions.

22 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study under paragraph
23 (1) shall include—

24 (A) an analysis of results for mechanistic
25 markers and clinically relevant outcomes; and

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
3 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
4 Representatives and the Senate a report on the study
5 under subsection (a).

6 **SEC. 505. STUDY ON CANCER RATES AMONG VETERANS.**

7 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
8 conduct a study on the incidence of cancer in veterans,
9 to determine trends in the rates of the incidence of cancer
10 in veterans, and on available early detection diagnostics,
11 to determine the feasibility and advisability of including
12 such diagnostics as part of the health care furnished to
13 veterans by the Secretary.

14 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a)
15 shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the
16 study, the following:

17 (1) The race and ethnicity of the veteran.

18 (2) The age of the veteran.

19 (3) The period of service and length of service
20 of the veteran in the Armed Forces.

21 (4) Any military occupational speciality of the
22 veteran.

23 (5) The gender of the veteran.

24 (6) Any type of cancer that the veteran has.

1 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
2 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
3 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
4 Representatives and the Senate a report on the study
5 under subsection (a).

6 **SEC. 506. STUDY ON FEASIBILITY AND ADVISABILITY OF**
7 **FURNISHING HOSPITAL CARE AND MEDICAL**
8 **SERVICES TO DEPENDENTS OF VETERANS**
9 **WHO PARTICIPATED IN TOXIC EXPOSURE**
10 **RISK ACTIVITIES.**

11 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
12 conduct a study on the feasibility and advisability of fur-
13 nishing hospital care and medical services to qualifying de-
14 pendants of veterans described in section 1710(e)(1)(G)
15 of title 38, United States Code, as added by section
16 103(a)(1), for any illness determined by the Secretary to
17 be connected to a toxic exposure risk activity carried out
18 by the veteran, as determined by the Secretary, notwith-
19 standing that there is insufficient medical evidence to con-
20 clude that such illness is attributable to such activity.

21 (b) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a)
22 shall include—

23 (1) an assessment of the impact of furnishing
24 hospital care and medical services to qualifying de-
25 pendants as described in such subsection on the abil-

1 ity of the Department of Veterans Affairs to furnish
2 hospital care and medical services to veterans;

3 (2) an assessment of the potential cost of fur-
4 nishing hospital care and medical services to quali-
5 fying dependents as described in such subsection;

6 (3) an estimate of the resources required to fur-
7 nish such care and services;

8 (4) an assessment of any stress or other effect
9 furnishing such care and services would have on the
10 claims and appeals system of the Department;

11 (5) an estimate of the number of qualifying de-
12 pendents who would be eligible for such care and
13 services; and

14 (6) an assessment of the feasibility of adjudi-
15 cating claims for such care and services.

16 (c) PHASED-IN APPLICATION.—In conducting the
17 study under subsection (a), the Secretary shall assess the
18 feasibility and advisability of phasing in the furnishing of
19 hospital care and medical services to qualifying depend-
20 ents described in such subsection by the decade in which
21 such toxic exposure risk activity occurred, starting with
22 the most recent decade.

23 (d) REVIEW OF TOXIC EXPOSURE CASES REGARDING
24 LIABILITY OF DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE.—In con-

1 ducting the study under subsection (a), the Secretary
2 shall—

3 (1) review known cases of toxic exposure on
4 military installations of the Department of Defense;

5 (2) analyze the liability of the Department of
6 Defense in each such case; and

7 (3) assess whether the Secretary of Defense
8 should provide care and services relating to such
9 toxic exposures under the TRICARE program.

10 (e) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
11 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
12 to Congress a report on the study conducted under sub-
13 section (a).

14 (f) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

15 (1) The terms “hospital care” and “medical
16 services” have the meanings given those terms in
17 section 1701 of title 38, United States Code.

18 (2) The term “illness” has the meaning given
19 that term in section 1171 of such title, as added by
20 section 202.

21 (3) The term “qualifying dependent” means—

22 (A) a dependent of a veteran described in
23 section 1710(e)(1)(G) of title 38, United States
24 Code, as added by section 104(a)(1), who re-
25 sided with the veteran during the period in

1 which, and on the installation at which, the vet-
2 eran participated in a toxic exposure risk activ-
3 ity;

4 (B) an individual who was in utero of such
5 a veteran or other qualifying dependent when
6 the veteran participated in a toxic exposure risk
7 activity; or

8 (C) a dependent of such a veteran who is
9 not described in subparagraph (A) or (B) but
10 who may have an illness that is connected to
11 the toxic exposure risk activity of the veteran,
12 as determined by the Secretary.

13 (4) The term “toxic exposure” has the meaning
14 given that term in section 101 of such title, as
15 added by section 102(b).

16 (5) The term “toxic exposure risk activity” has
17 the meaning given that term in section 1710(e)(4)
18 of such title, as added by section 102(c).

19 (6) The term “TRICARE program” has the
20 meaning given that term in section 1072 of such
21 title.

1 **SEC. 507. STUDY ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF WASTE RELATED**
2 **TO MANHATTAN PROJECT ON CERTAIN VET-**
3 **ERANS.**

4 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
5 conduct a study on the health trends of veterans who,
6 while serving in the active military, naval, air, or space
7 service—

8 (1) participated in activities relating to the
9 Manhattan Project (including activities relating to
10 covered waste) in connection with such service; or

11 (2) resided at or near, as determined by the
12 Secretary, the locations described in subsection (b).

13 (b) COVERED LOCATIONS.—The locations described
14 in this subsection are the following locations in the county
15 of St. Louis, Missouri:

16 (1) Coldwater Creek.

17 (2) The St. Louis Airport Site.

18 (3) The West Lake Landfill.

19 (4) Any other location in the county of St.
20 Louis, Missouri that is proximate to covered waste,
21 as determined by the Secretary.

22 (c) ELEMENTS.—The study under subsection (a)
23 shall assess, with respect to each veteran included in the
24 study, the following:

25 (1) The age, gender, and race of the veteran.

1 (2) The period and location of exposure to cov-
2 ered waste.

3 (3) Any type of cancer, or other illness associ-
4 ated with toxic exposure, that the veteran has.

5 (4) A comparison of the overall health condition
6 of the veteran, including any illness of the veteran
7 identified pursuant to paragraph (3), with the over-
8 all health condition of past and present civilian pop-
9 ulations residing at the same location of exposure.

10 (d) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
11 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
12 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the House of
13 Representatives and the Senate a report on the study
14 under subsection (a).

15 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

16 (1) The term “covered waste” means any waste
17 arising from activities carried out in connection with
18 the Manhattan Project.

19 (2) The term “illness” has the meaning given
20 that term in section 1171 of title 38, United States
21 Code, as added by section 202.

22 (3) The term “toxic exposure” has the meaning
23 given that term in section 101 of such title, as
24 added by section 102(b).

1 **SEC. 508. STUDY ON TOXIC EXPOSURE AND MENTAL**
2 **HEALTH OUTCOMES.**

3 (a) **STUDY REQUIRED.**—The Secretary of the De-
4 partment of Veterans Affairs shall enter into an agree-
5 ment with the National Academies of Sciences, Engineer-
6 ing, and Medicine for the conduct of a study of veterans
7 to assess possible relationships between toxic exposures ex-
8 perience during service in the Armed Forces and mental
9 health outcomes, including chronic multisymptom illness,
10 traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder, de-
11 pression, psychosis, suicide attempts, and suicide deaths.

12 (b) **ELEMENTS.**—For each veteran included in the
13 study under subsection (a), the following information shall
14 be collected and assessed:

15 (1) Age.

16 (2) Gender.

17 (3) Race and ethnicity.

18 (4) Period and length of service in the Armed
19 Forces.

20 (5) History of toxic exposure during service in
21 the Armed Forces.

22 (6) Any diagnosis of chronic multisymptom ill-
23 ness.

24 (7) Any diagnosis of a mental health or cog-
25 nitive disorder.

1 (8) Any history of suicide attempt or
2 suicidality.

3 (9) If the veteran died by suicide.

4 (c) REPORT.—Not later than two years after the date
5 after the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
6 to the Committees on Veterans' Affairs of the Senate and
7 House of Representatives a report containing the findings
8 of the study conducted under subsection (a).

9 **SEC. 509. STUDY ON VETERANS IN TERRITORIES OF THE**
10 **UNITED STATES.**

11 (a) GAO STUDY.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Comptroller General of
13 the United States shall conduct a study on the state
14 of access and barriers to benefits and services fur-
15 nished under laws administered by the Secretary of
16 Veterans Affairs to veterans in Territories of the
17 United States, including deficits in the availability
18 and accessibility of such benefits and services com-
19 pared to veterans elsewhere in the United States.

20 (2) ELEMENTS.—The study under paragraph
21 (1) shall include—

22 (A) the number of veterans in each Terri-
23 tory of the United States;

24 (B) the number of veterans in each Terri-
25 tory who are enrolled in the system of annual

1 patient enrollment of the Department of Vet-
2 erans Affairs under section 1705(a) of title 38,
3 United States Code;

4 (C) the number of veterans in each Terri-
5 tory who are eligible for services under section
6 1710 of such title but who are not enrolled as
7 described in subparagraph (B);

8 (D) a detailed description of obstacles fac-
9 ing veterans in each Territory in accessing
10 health care services, including those involving
11 the availability of such services to veterans in
12 the Territory in which the veterans reside, and
13 the distance required of veterans to journey to
14 receive services at a regional medical center of
15 the Veterans Health Administration, a commu-
16 nity-based outpatient clinic, or other full-service
17 medical facility of the Department, or death
18 center, respectively;

19 (E) a detailed description of obstacles fac-
20 ing veterans in each Territory in accessing re-
21 adjustment counseling services, including those
22 involving the availability of such services to vet-
23 erans in the Territory in which the veterans re-
24 side, and the distance required of veterans to

1 journey to receive services at a readjustment
2 counseling services center of the Department;

3 (F) a detailed description of obstacles fac-
4 ing veterans in each Territory in accessing
5 other veterans benefits, including those involv-
6 ing the availability of benefits and services to
7 veterans in the Territory in which the veterans
8 reside, and the distance required of the veterans
9 to journey to the nearest office of the Veterans
10 Benefits Administration;

11 (G) an analysis of the staffing and record-
12 keeping levels and quality of the offices of the
13 Department charged with serving veterans in
14 the Territories, including the availability of the
15 full- and part-time staff of each office to the
16 veterans they are charged with serving, and the
17 continuity of care provided by such staff to
18 such veterans;

19 (H) an analysis of the availability of the
20 Veterans Community Care Program established
21 under section 1703 of title 38, United States
22 Code, to veterans in each Territory;

23 (I) an analysis of the economic and health
24 consequences for veterans in each Territory re-
25 sulting from obstacles to accessing adequate as-

1 sistance and health care at facilities of the De-
2 partment;

3 (J) an analysis of the access to assistance
4 and health care provided to veterans in the
5 aftermath of major disasters declared in each of
6 the Territories since September 4, 2017; and

7 (K) recommendations for improving access
8 of veterans in the Territories to benefits and
9 services furnished by the Secretary, and reduc-
10 ing barriers and deficits in the availability and
11 accessibility of such benefits and services com-
12 pared to veterans elsewhere in the United
13 States.

14 (b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
15 of the enactment of this Act, the Comptroller General of
16 the United States shall submit to Congress a final report
17 setting forth the results of the study conducted under sub-
18 section (a), including the recommendations developed
19 under paragraph (2)(K) of such subsection.

20 (c) TERRITORY DEFINED.—In this section, the term
21 “Territory” includes American Samoa, the Commonwealth
22 of the Northern Marianas Islands, Guam, Puerto Rico,
23 and the Virgin Islands.

1 **SEC. 510. DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS PUBLIC**
2 **WEBSITE FOR TOXIC EXPOSURE RESEARCH.**

3 (a) WEBSITE.—Not later than one year after the date
4 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Veterans
5 Affairs shall establish, and maintain thereafter, a pub-
6 lically accessible internet website of the Department of
7 Veterans Affairs that serves as a clearinghouse for the
8 publication of all toxic exposure research carried out or
9 funded by the executive branch of the Federal Govern-
10 ment.

11 (b) RELATION TO WAR RELATED ILLNESS AND IN-
12 JURY STUDY CENTER.—The website developed and main-
13 tained under subsection (a) shall be housed under the
14 website of the War Related Illness and Injury Study Cen-
15 ter of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or successor
16 center.

17 (c) COORDINATION.—In carrying out subsection (a),
18 the Secretary shall coordinate with—

19 (1) the heads of each Federal department or
20 agency carrying out or funding toxic exposure re-
21 search;

22 (2) the War Related Illness and Injury Study
23 Center of the Department of Veterans Affairs, or
24 successor center; and

1 (3) any working group of the Department of
2 Veterans Affairs or other similar entity responsible
3 for coordinating toxic exposure research.

4 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

5 (1) The term “toxic exposure” has the meaning
6 given that term in section 101 of title 38, United
7 States Code, as added by section 102(b).

8 (2) The term “toxic exposure research” means
9 research on the health consequences of toxic expo-
10 sures experienced during service in the Armed
11 Forces.

12 **SEC. 511. BIENNIAL REPORT ON HEALTH EFFECTS OF JET**
13 **FUELS USED BY ARMED FORCES.**

14 Not later than one year after the date of the enact-
15 ment of this Act, and biennially thereafter during the sub-
16 sequent eight-year period, the Secretary of Veterans Af-
17 fairs shall submit to the Committees on Veterans’ Affairs
18 of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and make
19 publicly available, a report that includes—

20 (1) a discussion of the effect of various dif-
21 ferent types of jet fuels used by the Armed Forces
22 on the health of individuals by length of exposure;

23 (2) an identification of the immediate symp-
24 toms of jet fuel exposure that may indicate future
25 health risks;

1 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
2 after the date of the enactment of this Act, and an-
3 nually thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
4 shall publish a list of resources of the Department
5 of Veterans Affairs for—

6 (A) toxic-exposed veterans, including with
7 respect to—

8 (i) disability compensation under
9 chapter 11 of title 38, United States Code;

10 and

11 (ii) hospital care, medical services,
12 and nursing home care under section
13 1710(a)(2)(F) of such title;

14 (B) caregivers of toxic-exposed veterans
15 who are participating in the program of com-
16 prehensive assistance for family caregivers
17 under section 1720G(a) of such title; and

18 (C) survivors of toxic-exposed veterans who
19 are receiving death benefits under the laws ad-
20 ministered by the Secretary.

21 (2) UPDATE.—The Secretary shall periodically
22 update the list published under paragraph (1).

23 (3) LANGUAGES.—The Secretary shall publish
24 the list under paragraph (1) in languages including
25 the following:

- 1 (A) English.
- 2 (B) Spanish.
- 3 (C) Chinese.
- 4 (D) The seven other most commonly spo-
- 5 ken languages in the United States.

6 (b) OUTREACH.—The Secretary shall develop, with
7 input from the community, an informative outreach pro-
8 gram for veterans on illnesses that may be related to toxic
9 exposure, including outreach with respect to benefits and
10 support programs. Information distributed under the out-
11 reach program shall be treated as a fact sheet of the De-
12 partment of Veterans Affairs for purposes of making the
13 information available in multiple languages pursuant to
14 section 2 of the Veterans and Family Information Act
15 (Public Law 117–62; 38 U.S.C. 6303 note).

16 (c) VETERANS ORGANIZATIONS.—To the extent prac-
17 ticable, the Secretary shall share with national veterans
18 service organizations and other veterans groups, including
19 such organizations and groups that improve access by vet-
20 erans to health care and benefits, the list of resources
21 under subsection (a) and the outreach program under sub-
22 section (b).

1 **SEC. 603. INCORPORATION OF TOXIC EXPOSURE QUES-**
2 **TIONNAIRE DURING PRIMARY CARE AP-**
3 **POINTMENTS.**

4 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs
5 shall incorporate a clinical questionnaire to help determine
6 potential toxic exposures during active military, naval, air,
7 or space service as part of the initial screening conducted
8 for an appointment of a veteran with a primary care pro-
9 vider of the Department of Veterans Affairs to improve
10 understanding by the Department of toxic exposures of
11 veterans while serving in the Armed Forces.

12 (b) DETERMINATION OF QUESTIONS.—The questions
13 included in the questionnaire required under subsection
14 (a) shall be determined by the Secretary with input from
15 medical professionals.

16 **SEC. 604. TRAINING FOR PERSONNEL OF THE DEPART-**
17 **MENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS WITH RESPECT**
18 **TO TOXIC-EXPOSED VETERANS.**

19 (a) HEALTH CARE PERSONNEL.—The Secretary of
20 Veterans Affairs shall provide to health care personnel of
21 the Department of Veterans Affairs education and train-
22 ing to identify, treat, and assess the impact on toxic-ex-
23 posed veterans of illnesses related to toxic exposure and
24 inform such personnel of how to ask for additional infor-
25 mation from veterans regarding different toxic exposures.

26 (b) BENEFITS PERSONNEL.—

1 (1) STANDARD CLAIMS PROCESSOR TRAINING
2 CURRICULUM.—

3 (A) CURRICULUM.—Not later than 180
4 days after the date of the enactment of this
5 Act, the Secretary shall ensure that a standard
6 training curriculum exists for processors of
7 claims under the laws administered by the Sec-
8 retary who review claims for disability benefits
9 relating to service-connected disabilities based
10 on toxic exposure, including employees who ad-
11 judicate such claims.

12 (B) MATTERS INCLUDED.—The Secretary
13 shall ensure that the training under subpara-
14 graph (A) includes the following explanations
15 with respect to claims relating to toxic expo-
16 sure:

17 (i) A lack of a presumption of service
18 connection is not by itself sufficient to de-
19 termine that service connection does not
20 exist.

21 (ii) The claims adjudicator shall al-
22 ways consider whether direct service con-
23 nection is applicable and request, as need-
24 ed, an advisory medical opinion pursuant

1 to section 1168 of title 38, United States
2 Code, as added by section 303.

3 (iii) The claims adjudicator may re-
4 view and consider any record of the claim-
5 ant in an exposure tracking record system
6 pursuant to section 1119 of such title, as
7 added by section 302, but a lack of such
8 information is not by itself sufficient to de-
9 termine that such exposure did not occur
10 or sufficient to deny the claim.

11 (C) PROVISION OF TRAINING.—The Sec-
12 retary shall—

13 (i) provide training under subpara-
14 graph (A) to each employee described in
15 such subparagraph not less frequently than
16 annually; and

17 (ii) using the Systematic Technical
18 Accuracy Review program, or such suc-
19 cessor program, conduct a nationwide,
20 quarterly, randomized review of the quality
21 of adjudication of claims relating to toxic
22 exposure.

23 (2) STANDARD MEDICAL EXAMINER TRAINING
24 CURRICULUM.—

1 (A) CURRICULUM.—Not later than 180
2 days after the date of the enactment of this
3 Act, the Secretary shall ensure that a standard
4 medical training curriculum exists for medical
5 providers who conduct examinations and pro-
6 vide opinions pursuant to section 1168 of title
7 38, United States Code, as added by section
8 303, regardless of whether the provider is an
9 employee of the Department or a contractor.

10 (B) STANDARDIZED APPROACH.—The Sec-
11 retary shall ensure that the curriculum estab-
12 lished under subparagraph (A)—

13 (i) provides a standardized approach
14 to conducting and providing examinations
15 and opinions in accordance with such sec-
16 tion 1168; and

17 (ii) instructs medical providers to con-
18 sider, when conducting an examination or
19 providing an opinion—

20 (I) relevant medical and scientific
21 literature;

22 (II) the proximity, intensity, and
23 frequency of exposure of the indi-
24 vidual to the identified toxic exposure;

- 1 (III) medically unexplained
2 chronic multisymptom illnesses; and
3 (IV) all competent and credible
4 evidence of record.

5 **SEC. 605. GUIDELINES FOR ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY ON PO-**
6 **TENTIAL RISKS AND PREVENTION OF TOXIC**
7 **EXPOSURES.**

8 Not later than 90 days after the date of the enact-
9 ment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense and the Sec-
10 retary of Veterans Affairs shall jointly coordinate and es-
11 tablish guidelines to be used during training of members
12 of the Armed Forces serving on active duty to provide the
13 members awareness of the potential risks of toxic expo-
14 sures and ways to prevent being exposed during combat.

15 **TITLE VII—REGISTRIES,**
16 **RECORDS, AND OTHER MATTERS**

17 **SEC. 701. REGISTRY OF INDIVIDUALS EXPOSED TO PER-**
18 **AND POLYFLUOROALKYL SUBSTANCES ON**
19 **MILITARY INSTALLATIONS.**

20 (a) ESTABLISHMENT OF REGISTRY.—

21 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year
22 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
23 retary of Veterans Affairs shall—

24 (A) establish and maintain a registry for
25 eligible individuals who may have been exposed

1 to per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (in this
2 section referred to as “PFAS”) due to the envi-
3 ronmental release of aqueous film-forming foam
4 (in this section referred to as “AFFF”) on mili-
5 tary installations to meet the requirements of
6 military specification MIL-F-24385F;

7 (B) include any information in such reg-
8 istry that the Secretary determines necessary to
9 ascertain and monitor the health effects of the
10 exposure of members of the Armed Forces to
11 PFAS associated with AFFF;

12 (C) develop a public information campaign
13 to inform eligible individuals about the registry,
14 including how to register and the benefits of
15 registering; and

16 (D) periodically notify eligible individuals
17 of significant developments in the study and
18 treatment of conditions associated with expo-
19 sure to PFAS.

20 (2) COORDINATION.—The Secretary of Vet-
21 erans Affairs shall coordinate with the Secretary of
22 Defense in carrying out paragraph (1).

23 (b) REPORTS.—

24 (1) INITIAL REPORT.—Not later than one year
25 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-

1 retary of Defense shall submit to Congress a report
2 regarding the following:

3 (A) Sources of PFAS on military installa-
4 tions other than AFFF.

5 (B) Any recommendation of the Secretary
6 regarding whether to expand eligibility for the
7 registry to individuals exposed to sources of
8 PFAS described in subparagraph (A).

9 (2) INTERIM REPORT.—Not later than two
10 years after the date on which the registry under sub-
11 section (a) is established, the Secretary of Veterans
12 Affairs shall submit to Congress an initial report
13 containing the following:

14 (A) An assessment of the effectiveness of
15 actions taken by the Secretary of Veterans Af-
16 fairs and the Secretary of Defense to collect
17 and maintain information on the health effects
18 of exposure to PFAS.

19 (B) Recommendations to improve the col-
20 lection and maintenance of such information.

21 (C) Using established and previously pub-
22 lished epidemiological studies, recommendations
23 regarding the most effective and prudent means
24 of addressing the medical needs of eligible indi-
25 viduals with respect to exposure to PFAS.

1 (3) FOLLOWUP REPORT.—Not later than five
2 years after submitting the initial report under para-
3 graph (1), the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall
4 submit to Congress a followup report containing the
5 following:

6 (A) An update to the initial report sub-
7 mitted under paragraph (1).

8 (B) An assessment of whether and to what
9 degree the content of the registry established
10 under subsection (a) is current and scientif-
11 ically up to date.

12 (4) INDEPENDENT SCIENTIFIC ORGANIZA-
13 TION.—The Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall enter
14 into an agreement with an independent scientific or-
15 ganization to prepare the reports under paragraphs
16 (1) and (2).

17 (c) RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ADDITIONAL EXPO-
18 SURES TO BE INCLUDED.—Not later than five years after
19 the date of the enactment of this Act, and every five years
20 thereafter, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, in consulta-
21 tion with the Secretary of Defense and the Administrator
22 of the Environmental Protection Agency, shall submit to
23 Congress recommendations for additional chemicals with
24 respect to which individuals exposed to such chemicals

1 should be included in the registry established under sub-
2 section (a).

3 (d) **ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUAL DEFINED.**—In this sec-
4 tion, the term “eligible individual” means any individual
5 who, on or after a date specified by the Secretary of Vet-
6 erans Affairs through regulations, served or is serving in
7 the Armed Forces at a military installation where AFFF
8 was used or at another location of the Department of De-
9 fense where AFFF was used.

10 **SEC. 702. FORT MCCLELLAN HEALTH REGISTRY.**

11 (a) **ESTABLISHMENT.**—The Secretary of Veterans
12 Affairs shall establish and maintain a special record to be
13 known as the Fort McClellan Health Registry (in this sec-
14 tion referred to as the “Registry”).

15 (b) **CONTENTS.**—Except as provided in subsection
16 (c), the Registry shall include the following information:

17 (1) A list containing the name of each indi-
18 vidual who, while serving as a member of the Armed
19 Forces, was stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama,
20 at any time during the period beginning January 1,
21 1935, and ending on May 20, 1999, and who—

22 (A) applies for care or services from the
23 Department of Veterans Affairs under chapter
24 17 of title 38, United States Code;

1 (B) files a claim for compensation under
2 chapter 11 of such title on the basis of any dis-
3 ability which may be associated with such serv-
4 ice;

5 (C) dies and is survived by a spouse, child,
6 or parent who files a claim for dependency and
7 indemnity compensation under chapter 13 of
8 such title on the basis of such service;

9 (D) requests from the Secretary a health
10 examination under subsection (d); or

11 (E) receives from the Secretary a health
12 examination similar to the health examination
13 referred to in subparagraph (D) and requests
14 inclusion in the Registry.

15 (2) Relevant medical data relating to the health
16 status of, and other information that the Secretary
17 considers relevant and appropriate with respect to,
18 each individual described in paragraph (1) who—

19 (A) grants to the Secretary permission to
20 include such information in the Registry; or

21 (B) at the time the individual is listed in
22 the Registry, is deceased.

23 (c) INDIVIDUALS SUBMITTING CLAIMS OR MAKING
24 REQUESTS BEFORE DATE OF ENACTMENT.—If in the
25 case of an individual described in subsection (b)(1) the

1 application, claim, or request referred to in such sub-
2 section was submitted, filed, or made before the date of
3 the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall, to the ex-
4 tent feasible, include in the Registry such individual's
5 name and the data and information, if any, described in
6 subsection (b)(2) relating to the individual.

7 (d) EXAMINATIONS.—Upon the request of a veteran
8 who was stationed at Fort McClellan, Alabama, at any
9 time during the period beginning January 1, 1935, and
10 ending on May 20, 1999, the Secretary shall provide the
11 veteran with a health examination (including any appro-
12 priate diagnostic tests) and consultation and counseling
13 with respect to the results of the examination and the
14 tests.

15 (e) OUTREACH.—

16 (1) ONGOING OUTREACH TO INDIVIDUALS LIST-
17 ED IN REGISTRY.—The Secretary shall, from time to
18 time, notify individuals listed in the Registry of sig-
19 nificant developments in research on the health con-
20 sequences of potential exposure to a toxic substance
21 or environmental hazard related to service at Fort
22 McClellan.

23 (2) EXAMINATION OUTREACH.—The Secretary
24 shall carry out appropriate outreach activities with
25 respect to the provision of any health examinations

1 (including any diagnostic tests) and consultation and
2 counseling services under subsection (d).

3 (f) CONSULTATION.—The Secretary of Veterans Af-
4 fairs shall consult with the Secretary of Defense to acquire
5 information maintained by the Secretary of Defense that
6 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs considers necessary to
7 establish and maintain the Registry.

8 **SEC. 703. INDEPENDENT STUDY ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITU-**
9 **DINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.**

10 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 60 days after the
11 date of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary of Defense
12 shall enter into a contract with an independent research
13 entity described in subsection (b) to carry out a com-
14 prehensive study of the development of the Individual Lon-
15 gitudinal Exposure Record, or successor system, to deter-
16 mine—

17 (1) the quality of the location data, occupa-
18 tional and environmental exposure data, and health
19 surveillance data; and

20 (2) whether a member of the Armed Forces can
21 be reasonably assured that any toxic exposure they
22 experience during service in the Armed Forces will
23 be accurately reflected in the record of the member
24 in such Individual Longitudinal Exposure Record.

1 (b) INDEPENDENT RESEARCH ENTITY.—The entity
2 described in this subsection is an independent research en-
3 tity that is a not-for-profit entity or a federally funded
4 research and development center with appropriate exper-
5 tise and analytical capability to carry out the study re-
6 quired under subsection (a).

7 (c) TOXIC EXPOSURE DEFINED.—In this section, the
8 term “toxic exposure” has the meaning given that term
9 in section 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as
10 added by section 102(b).

11 **SEC. 704. BIENNIAL REPORT ON INDIVIDUAL LONGITU-**
12 **DINAL EXPOSURE RECORD.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Not later than one year after the
14 date on which the Individual Longitudinal Exposure
15 Record, or successor system, achieves full operation capa-
16 bility, as determined by the Secretary of Defense, and
17 every 180 days thereafter, the Secretary of Defense, in
18 consultation with the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, shall
19 submit to the appropriate committees of Congress a report
20 on—

21 (1) the data quality of the databases of the De-
22 partment of Defense that provide the information
23 presented in such Individual Longitudinal Exposure
24 Record; and

1 (2) the usefulness of such Individual Longitu-
2 dinal Exposure Record in supporting members of the
3 Armed Forces and veterans in receiving health care
4 and benefits from the Department of Defense and
5 the Department of Veterans Affairs.

6 (b) ELEMENTS.—Each report required by subsection
7 (a) shall include, for the period covered by the report, the
8 following:

9 (1) An identification of toxic exposure events
10 that may not be fully captured by the current sys-
11 tems of the Department of Defense for environ-
12 mental, occupational, and health monitoring, and
13 recommendations for how to improve those systems.

14 (2) An analysis of the quality of the location
15 data used by the Department of Defense in deter-
16 mining toxic exposures of members of the Armed
17 Forces and veterans, and recommendations for how
18 to improve the quality of that location data if nec-
19 essary.

20 (c) REPORT ON NATIONAL GUARD USE OF ILER.—
21 Not later than one year after the date of the enactment
22 of this Act, the Secretary of Defense shall submit to the
23 appropriate committees of Congress a report on the feasi-
24 bility of modifying the Individual Longitudinal Exposure
25 Record to ensure that a member of the National Guard

1 who is deployed in the United States in connection with
2 a natural disaster, without regard to duty status (includ-
3 ing any duty under title 10 or title 32, United States
4 Code, or State active duty), may record information re-
5 garding a suspected exposure by the member to toxic sub-
6 stances during such deployment.

7 (d) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

8 (1) APPROPRIATE COMMITTEES OF CON-
9 GRESS.—The term “appropriate committees of Con-
10 gress” means—

11 (A) the Committee on Armed Services and
12 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the Sen-
13 ate; and

14 (B) the Committee on Armed Services and
15 the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs of the
16 House of Representatives.

17 (2) TOXIC EXPOSURE.—The term “toxic expo-
18 sure” has the meaning given that term in section
19 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as added by
20 section 102(b).

21 **SEC. 705. CORRECTION OF EXPOSURE RECORDS BY MEM-**
22 **BERS OF THE ARMED FORCES AND VET-**
23 **ERANS.**

24 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary of Defense shall
25 provide a means for members of the Armed Forces and

1 veterans to update their records as necessary to reflect a
2 toxic exposure by such member or veteran in the Indi-
3 vidual Longitudinal Exposure Record, or successor sys-
4 tem.

5 (b) EVIDENCE.—

6 (1) PROVISION OF EVIDENCE.—To update a
7 record under subsection (a), a member of the Armed
8 Forces or veteran, as the case may be, shall provide
9 such evidence as the Secretary of Defense considers
10 necessary.

11 (2) BENEFIT OF THE DOUBT.—In reviewing
12 evidence provided under paragraph (1), the Sec-
13 retary of Defense shall give the benefit of the doubt
14 to the member of the Armed Forces or veteran who
15 provided the evidence, as the case may be, in a man-
16 ner that is equivalent to the benefit of the doubt re-
17 quired under section 5107(b) of title 38, United
18 States Code.

19 (3) REGULATIONS.—The Secretary of Defense
20 shall prescribe by regulation the evidence considered
21 necessary under paragraph (1).

22 (c) TOXIC EXPOSURE DEFINED.—In this section, the
23 term “toxic exposure” has the meaning given that term
24 in section 101(37) of title 38, United States Code, as
25 added by section 102(b).

1 **SEC. 706. FEDERAL CAUSE OF ACTION RELATING TO**
2 **WATER AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CARO-**
3 **LINA.**

4 (a) **IN GENERAL.**—An individual, including a veteran
5 (as defined in section 101 of title 38, United States Code),
6 or the legal representative of such an individual, who re-
7 sided, worked, or was otherwise exposed (including in
8 utero exposure) for not less than 30 days during the pe-
9 riod beginning on August 1, 1953, and ending on Decem-
10 ber 31, 1987, to water at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina,
11 that was supplied by, or on behalf of, the United States
12 may bring an action in the United States District Court
13 for the Eastern District of North Carolina to obtain ap-
14 propriate relief for harm that was caused by exposure to
15 the water at Camp Lejeune.

16 (b) **BURDENS AND STANDARD OF PROOF.**—

17 (1) **IN GENERAL.**—The burden of proof shall be
18 on the party filing the action to show one or more
19 relationships between the water at Camp Lejeune
20 and the harm.

21 (2) **STANDARDS.**—To meet the burden of proof
22 described in paragraph (1), a party shall produce
23 evidence showing that the relationship between expo-
24 sure to the water at Camp Lejeune and the harm
25 is—

1 (A) sufficient to conclude that a causal re-
2 lationship exists; or

3 (B) sufficient to conclude that a causal re-
4 lationship is at least as likely as not.

5 (c) EXCLUSIVE JURISDICTION AND VENUE.—The
6 United States District Court for the Eastern District of
7 North Carolina shall have exclusive jurisdiction over any
8 action filed under subsection (a), and shall be the exclusive
9 venue for such an action. Nothing in this subsection shall
10 impair the right of any party to a trial by jury.

11 (d) EXCLUSIVE REMEDY.—

12 (1) IN GENERAL.—An individual, or legal rep-
13 resentative of an individual, who brings an action
14 under this section for a harm described in subsection
15 (a), including a latent disease, may not thereafter
16 bring a tort action against the United States for
17 such harm pursuant to any other law.

18 (2) HEALTH AND DISABILITY BENEFITS RELAT-
19 ING TO WATER EXPOSURE.—Any award made to an
20 individual, or legal representative of an individual,
21 under this section shall be offset by the amount of
22 any disability award, payment, or benefit provided to
23 the individual, or legal representative—

24 (A) under—

1 (i) any program under the laws ad-
2 ministered by the Secretary of Veterans
3 Affairs;

4 (ii) the Medicare program under title
5 XVIII of the Social Security Act (42
6 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.); or

7 (iii) the Medicaid program under title
8 XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C.
9 1396 et seq.); and

10 (B) in connection with health care or a dis-
11 ability relating to exposure to the water at
12 Camp Lejeune.

13 (e) IMMUNITY LIMITATION.—The United States may
14 not assert any claim to immunity in an action under this
15 section that would otherwise be available under section
16 2680(a) of title 28, United States Code.

17 (f) NO PUNITIVE DAMAGES.—Punitive damages may
18 not be awarded in any action under this section.

19 (g) DISPOSITION BY FEDERAL AGENCY RE-
20 QUIRED.—An individual may not bring an action under
21 this section before complying with section 2675 of title 28,
22 United States Code.

23 (h) EXCEPTION FOR COMBATANT ACTIVITIES.—This
24 section does not apply to any claim or action arising out
25 of the combatant activities of the Armed Forces.

1 (i) APPLICABILITY; PERIOD FOR FILING.—

2 (1) APPLICABILITY.—This section shall apply
3 only to a claim accruing before the date of enact-
4 ment of this Act.

5 (2) STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS.—A claim in an
6 action under this section may not be commenced
7 after the later of—

8 (A) the date that is two years after the
9 date of enactment of this Act; or

10 (B) the date that is 180 days after the
11 date on which the claim is denied under section
12 2675 of title 28, United States Code.

13 (3) INAPPLICABILITY OF OTHER LIMITA-
14 TIONS.—Any applicable statute of repose or statute
15 of limitations, other than under paragraph (2), shall
16 not apply to a claim under this section.

17 **SEC. 707. VETERANS TOXIC EXPOSURES FUND.**

18 Chapter 3 is amended by adding at the end the fol-
19 lowing new section:

20 **“§ 324. Veterans Toxic Exposures Fund**

21 “(a) ESTABLISHMENT.—There is hereby established
22 in the Treasury of the United States an account to be
23 known as the “Veterans Toxic Exposures Fund” (the
24 “Fund”), to be administered through the Department of
25 Veterans Affairs, to provide for investment in the delivery

1 of veterans' health care, research, and benefits associated
2 with hazardous exposure in service.

3 “(b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
4 is authorized to be appropriated to the Fund for fiscal
5 year 2023 and each subsequent fiscal year such sums as
6 are necessary to increase funding, over the fiscal year
7 2021 level for the Veterans Health Administration of the
8 Department of Veterans Affairs, for any expenses incident
9 to the delivery of veterans' health care and benefits associ-
10 ated with exposure to environmental hazards in service,
11 including administrative expenses, such as claims proc-
12 essing and appeals, and for medical research related to
13 hazardous exposures. Amounts appropriated to the Fund
14 pursuant to this subsection shall be counted as direct
15 spending under the Congressional Budget and Impound-
16 ment Control Act of 1974 and any other Act.

17 “(c) ESTIMATES FOR CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDER-
18 ATION.—The Secretary shall include in documents sub-
19 mitted to Congress in support of the President's budget
20 submitted pursuant to section 1105 of title 31, United
21 States Code, detailed estimates of the sums described in
22 subsection (b) for the applicable fiscal year.

23 “(d) PROCEDURES FOR ESTIMATES.—The Secretary,
24 after consultation with the Committees on Appropriations
25 of the House of Representatives and the Senate, may es-

1 tablish policies and procedures for developing the annual
2 detailed estimates required in subsection (c).”.

3 **SEC. 708. AUTHORIZATION OF ELECTRONIC NOTICE IN**
4 **CLAIMS UNDER LAWS ADMINISTERED BY THE**
5 **SECRETARY OF VETERANS AFFAIRS.**

6 Title 38, United States Code, is amended as follows:

7 (1) By striking section 5100 and inserting the
8 following:

9 **“§ 5100. Definitions**

10 “In this chapter:

11 “(1) The term ‘claimant’ means any individual
12 applying for, or submitting a claim for, any benefit
13 under the laws administered by the Secretary.

14 “(2) The term ‘notice’ means a communication
15 issued through means (including electronic means)
16 prescribed by the Secretary.”.

17 (2) In section 5104, by adding at the end the
18 following new subsection:

19 “(c) The Secretary may provide notice under sub-
20 section (a) electronically if a claimant (or the claimant’s
21 representative) elects to receive such notice electronically.
22 A claimant (or the claimant’s representative) may revoke
23 such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the
24 Secretary.

25 “(d) The Secretary shall annually—

1 “(1) solicit recommendations from stakeholders
2 on how to improve notice under this section; and

3 “(2) publish such recommendations on a pub-
4 licly available website of the Department.”.

5 (3) In section 5104B(c), in the matter pre-
6 ceding paragraph (1) by striking “in writing” and
7 inserting “to the claimant (and any representative of
8 such claimant)”.

9 (4) In section 7104—

10 (A) in the heading, by adding “; **deci-**
11 **sions; notice**” at the end; and

12 (B) by striking subsection (e) and insert-
13 ing the following:

14 “(e) After reaching a decision on an appeal, the
15 Board shall promptly issue notice (as that term is defined
16 in section 5100 of this title) of such decision to the fol-
17 lowing:

18 “(1) The appellant.

19 “(2) Any other party with a right to notice of
20 such decision.

21 “(3) Any authorized representative of the appel-
22 lant or party described in paragraph (2).

23 “(f) The Secretary may provide notice under sub-
24 section (e) electronically if a claimant (or the claimant’s
25 representative) elects to receive such notice electronically.

1 A claimant (or the claimant’s representative) may revoke
2 such an election at any time, by means prescribed by the
3 Secretary.”.

4 (5) In section 7105(b)(1)(A), by striking “mail-
5 ing” and inserting “issuance”.

6 (6) In section 7105A(a), by striking “mailed”
7 and inserting “issued”.

8 (7) In section 7266(a), by striking “mailed”
9 and inserting “issued”.

10 **SEC. 709. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR EX-**
11 **PANSION OF CLAIMS AUTOMATION.**

12 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
13 retary of Veterans Affairs \$30,000,000 for fiscal year
14 2023 to support expected increased claims processing for
15 newly eligible veterans pursuant to this Act and the
16 amendments made by this Act by—

17 (1) supporting the automation of processing
18 claims by the Veterans Benefits Administration of
19 the Department of Veterans Affairs;

20 (2) adding self-service features to the system by
21 which individuals file claims;

22 (3) removing duplicative efforts regarding the
23 processing of claims; and

24 (4) reducing the dependency of the Department
25 on the legacy claim system.

1 **SEC. 710. NON-APPLICABILITY OF NON-DEPARTMENT OF**
2 **VETERANS AFFAIRS COVENANTS NOT TO**
3 **COMPETE TO APPOINTMENT OF VETERANS**
4 **HEALTH ADMINISTRATION PERSONNEL.**

5 (a) IN GENERAL.—Subchapter I of chapter 74 of title
6 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end
7 the following new section:

8 **“§ 7414. Effect of non-Department covenants not to**
9 **compete**

10 “(a) NON-APPLICABILITY.—Except as provided in
11 subsection (b), in the case of an individual who is an appli-
12 cant for appointment to a position in the Veterans Health
13 Administration described in section 7401 of this title, any
14 covenant not to compete into which the individual has en-
15 tered with a non-Department facility or party shall have
16 no force or effect with respect to the appointment of the
17 individual to such a position.

18 “(b) SERVICE OBLIGATION.—(1) Any individual who
19 is appointed to such a position in the Veterans Health Ad-
20 ministration shall, as a condition of such appointment,
21 agree to provide clinical services at a Department medical
22 facility for the duration of the period described in para-
23 graph (2).

24 “(2) The period described in this paragraph is the
25 period that begins on the date on which an individual is

1 appointed to such a position and ends on the latter of the
2 following dates:

3 “(A) The date that is one year after such date
4 of appointment.

5 “(B) The date of the termination of any cov-
6 enant not to compete entered into between the indi-
7 vidual and a non-Department facility or party.

8 “(3) The Secretary may waive the requirement under
9 paragraph (1) with respect to an individual at the discre-
10 tion of the Secretary.

11 “(c) TERMINATION OF DEPARTMENT EMPLOY-
12 MENT.—In the case of an individual who is appointed to
13 such a position in the Veterans Health Administration
14 who has entered into a covenant not to compete that is
15 rendered non-applicable pursuant to subsection (a), if the
16 individual’s employment at the Veterans Health Adminis-
17 tration is terminated for any reason before the specified
18 termination date of such covenant, subsection (a) shall not
19 apply with respect to such covenant after the date of the
20 termination of the individual’s employment at the Vet-
21 erans Health Administration.

22 “(d) COVENANT NOT TO COMPETE.—In this section,
23 the term ‘covenant not to compete’ means an agreement—

1 “(1) between an employee and employer or a
2 contractor and principal that restricts such employee
3 or contractor from performing—

4 “(A) any work for another employer for a
5 specified period of time;

6 “(B) any work in a specified geographical
7 area; or

8 “(C) work for another employer per-
9 forming work that is similar to the work such
10 employee or contractor performed for the em-
11 ployer or principal, included as a party to the
12 agreement; and

13 “(2) that is entered into after the date of enact-
14 ment of this Act.”.

15 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
16 at the beginning of such chapter is amended by inserting
17 after the item relating to section 7413 the following new
18 item:

“7414. Effect of non-Department covenants not to compete.”.

19 **SEC. 711. RECRUITMENT OF PHYSICIANS ON A CONTIN-**
20 **GENT BASIS PRIOR TO COMPLETION OF**
21 **TRAINING REQUIREMENTS.**

22 Section 7402 of title 38, United States Code, is
23 amended—

24 (1) in subsection (b)(1)—

1 (A) in the matter preceding subparagraph
2 (A) by inserting “or to be offered an appoint-
3 ment to such position on a contingent basis
4 under subsection (h)” after “position”; and

5 (B) by striking subparagraph (B) and in-
6 serting the following:

7 “(B)(i) have completed a residency leading to
8 board eligibility in a specialty, satisfactory to the
9 Secretary; or

10 “(ii) with respect to an offer for an appoint-
11 ment on a contingent basis under subsection (h),
12 complete such a residency by not later than two
13 years after the date of such offer; and”;

14 (2) by adding at the end the following new sub-
15 section:

16 “(h)(1) The Secretary may appoint an individual
17 under subsection (b)(1) on a contingent basis in accord-
18 ance with this subsection if the Secretary reasonably an-
19 ticipated that the individual will have completed the re-
20 quirements for appointment under such subsection (b)(1)
21 by not later than two years after the date on which the
22 individual is so appointed.

23 “(2) An individual who is appointed to a position on
24 a contingent basis under paragraph (1) shall be appointed
25 to such position on a permanent basis if, by not later than

1 two years after the date of the contingent appointment,
2 the individual completes all the requirements for appoint-
3 ment under subsection (b)(1).

4 “(3) An individual who is appointed on a contingent
5 basis under paragraph (1) who fails to complete the re-
6 quirements for appointment under subsection (b)(1) by
7 not later than two years after the date on which the indi-
8 vidual is so appointed may not be appointed to such posi-
9 tion on a permanent basis.”.

10 **SEC. 712. AUTHORITY FOR SECRETARY OF VETERANS AF-**
11 **FAIRS TO AWARD GRANTS TO STATES TO IM-**
12 **PROVE OUTREACH TO VETERANS.**

13 (a) IN GENERAL.—Chapter 63 of title 38, United
14 States Code, is amended—

15 (1) by redesignating sections 6307 and 6308
16 and sections 6308 and 6309, respectively; and

17 (2) by inserting after section 6306 the following
18 new section 6307:

19 **“§ 6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to vet-**
20 **erans**

21 “(a) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this section to
22 provide for assistance by the Secretary to States to carry
23 out programs that—

24 “(1) improve outreach and assistance to vet-
25 erans and the spouses, children, and parents of vet-

1 erans, to ensure that such individuals are fully in-
2 formed about any veterans and veterans-related ben-
3 efits and programs (including State veterans pro-
4 grams) for which they may be eligible; and

5 “(2) facilitate opportunities for such individuals
6 to receive competent, qualified services in the prepa-
7 ration, presentation, and prosecution of veterans
8 benefits claims.

9 “(b) AUTHORITY.—The Secretary may award grants
10 to States—

11 “(1) to carry out, coordinate, improve, or other-
12 wise enhance outreach activities;

13 “(2) to increase the number of county or tribal
14 veterans service officers serving in the State by hir-
15 ing new, additional such officers; or

16 “(3) to expand, carry out, coordinate, improve,
17 or otherwise enhance existing programs, activities,
18 and services of the State’s existing organization that
19 has been recognized by the Department of Veterans
20 Affairs pursuant to section 5902, in the preparation,
21 presentation, and prosecution of claims for veterans
22 benefits through representatives who hold positions
23 as county or Tribal veterans service officers.

24 “(c) APPLICATION.—(1) To be eligible for a grant
25 under this section, a State shall submit to the Secretary

1 an application therefor at such time, in such manner, and
2 containing such information as the Secretary may require.

3 “(2) Each application submitted under paragraph (1)
4 shall include the following:

5 “(A) A detailed plan for the use of the grant.

6 “(B) A description of the programs through
7 which the State will meet the outcome measures de-
8 veloped by the Secretary under subsection (i).

9 “(C) A description of how the State will dis-
10 tribute grant amounts equitably among counties (or
11 Tribal lands, as the case may be) with varying levels
12 of urbanization.

13 “(D) A plan for how the grant will be used to
14 meet the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska
15 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,
16 and veterans from other underserved communities.

17 “(d) DISTRIBUTION.—The Secretary shall seek to en-
18 sure that grants awarded under this section are equitably
19 distributed among States with varying levels of urbaniza-
20 tion.

21 “(e) PRIORITY.—The Secretary shall prioritize
22 awarding grants under this section that will serve the fol-
23 lowing areas:

24 “(1) Areas with a critical shortage of county or
25 tribal veterans service officers.

1 “(2) Areas with high rates of—

2 “(A) suicide among veterans; or

3 “(B) referrals to the Veterans Crisis Line.

4 “(f) USE OF COUNTY OR TRIBAL VETERANS SERV-
5 ICE OFFICERS.—A State that receives a grant under this
6 section to carry out an activity described in subsection
7 (b)(1) shall carry out the activity through—

8 “(1) a county or Tribal veterans service officer
9 of the State; or

10 “(2) if the State does not have a county or trib-
11 al veterans service officer, or if the county or Tribal
12 veterans service officers of the State cover only a
13 portion of that State, an appropriate entity of a
14 State, local, or Tribal government, or another pub-
15 licly funded entity, as determined by the Secretary.

16 “(g) REQUIRED ACTIVITIES.—Any grant awarded
17 under this section shall be used—

18 “(1) to expand existing programs, activities,
19 and services;

20 “(2) to hire and maintain new, additional coun-
21 ty or Tribal veterans service officers; or

22 “(3) for travel and transportation to facilitate
23 carrying out paragraph (1) or (2).

24 “(h) OTHER PERMISSIBLE ACTIVITIES.—A grant
25 under this section may be used to provide education and

1 training, including on-the-job training, for State, county,
2 local, and tribal government employees who provide (or
3 when trained will provide) veterans outreach services in
4 order for those employees to obtain and maintain accredi-
5 tation in accordance with procedures approved by the Sec-
6 retary.

7 “(i) OUTCOME MEASURES.—(1) The Secretary shall
8 develop and provide to each State that receives a grant
9 under this section written guidance on the following:

10 “(A) Outcome measures.

11 “(B) Policies of the Department.

12 “(2) In developing outcome measures under para-
13 graph (1), the Secretary shall consider the following goals:

14 “(A) Increasing the use of veterans and vet-
15 erans-related benefits, particularly among vulnerable
16 populations.

17 “(B) Increasing the number of county and trib-
18 al veterans service officers recognized by the Sec-
19 retary for the representation of veterans under chap-
20 ter 59 of this title.

21 “(j) TRACKING REQUIREMENTS.—(1) With respect
22 to each grant awarded under this section, the Secretary
23 shall track the use of veterans benefits among the popu-
24 lation served by the grant, including the average period
25 of time between the date on which a veteran or other eligi-

1 ble claimant applies for such a benefit and the date on
2 which the veteran or other eligible claimant receives the
3 benefit, disaggregated by type of benefit.

4 “(2) Not less frequently than annually during the life
5 of the grant program established under this section, the
6 Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on—

7 “(A) the information tracked under paragraph
8 (1);

9 “(B) how the grants awarded under this section
10 serve the unique needs of American Indian or Alaska
11 Native veterans, elderly veterans, women veterans,
12 and veterans from other underserved communities;
13 and

14 “(C) other information provided by States pur-
15 suant to the grant reporting requirements.

16 “(k) PERFORMANCE REVIEW.—(1) The Secretary
17 shall—

18 “(A) review the performance of each State that
19 receives a grant under this section; and

20 “(B) make information regarding such perform-
21 ance publicly available.

22 “(l) REMEDIATION PLAN.—(1) In the case of a State
23 that receives a grant under this section and does not meet
24 the outcome measures developed by the Secretary under
25 subsection (i), the Secretary shall require the State to sub-

1 mit a remediation plan under which the State shall de-
2 scribe how and when it plans to meet such outcome meas-
3 ures.

4 “(2) The Secretary may not award a subsequent
5 grant under this section to a State described in paragraph
6 (1) unless the Secretary approves the remediation plan
7 submitted by the State.

8 “(m) MAXIMUM AMOUNT.—The amount of a grant
9 awarded under this section may not exceed 10 percent of
10 amounts made available for grants under this section for
11 the fiscal year in which the grant is awarded.

12 “(n) SUPPLEMENT, NOT SUPPLANT.—Any grant
13 awarded under this section shall be used to supplement
14 and not supplant State and local funding that is otherwise
15 available.

16 “(o) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There
17 is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary for each
18 of fiscal years 2023 through 2027, \$50,000,000 to carry
19 out this section.

20 “(p) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

21 “(1) The term ‘county or tribal veterans service
22 officer’ includes a local equivalent veterans service
23 officer.

24 “(2) The term ‘State’ includes each Indian
25 Tribe, the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth

1 of Puerto Rico, the Commonwealth of the Northern
2 Mariana Islands, and any territory or possession of
3 the United States.

4 “(3) The term ‘Veterans Crisis Line’ means the
5 toll-free hotline for veterans established under sec-
6 tion 1720F(h) of this title.”.

7 (b) CLERICAL AMENDMENT.—The table of sections
8 at the beginning of chapter 63 of such title is amended
9 by striking the items relating to sections 6307 and 6308
10 and inserting the following new items:

“6307. Grants to States to improve outreach to veterans.

“6308. Outreach for eligible dependents.

“6309. Biennial report to Congress.”.

11 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF ADDITIONAL FULL-TIME
12 EQUIVALENT EMPLOYEE.—During fiscal years 2023
13 through 2027, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs may hire
14 an additional full-time equivalent employee in the Office
15 of the General Counsel of the Department of Veterans Af-
16 fairs, as compared to the number of full-time equivalent
17 employees that would otherwise be authorized for such of-
18 fice, to carry out duties under the accreditation, discipline,
19 and fees program.

20 **SEC. 713. STUDY AND REPORT ON HERBICIDE AGENT EXPO-**
21 **SURE IN PANAMA CANAL ZONE.**

22 (a) STUDY.—The Secretary of Defense shall conduct
23 a study on the exposure of members of the Armed Forces
24 to herbicide agents, including Agent Orange and Agent

1 Purple, in the Panama Canal Zone during the period be-
2 ginning on January 1, 1958, and ending on December 31,
3 1999.

4 (b) REPORT.—Not later than one year after the date
5 of the enactment of this Act, the Secretary shall submit
6 to Congress a report on the study conducted under sub-
7 section (a).

8 **SEC. 714. BUDGET INFORMATION FOR ALTERNATIVES TO**
9 **BURN PITS.**

10 The Secretary of Defense shall include in the budget
11 submission of the President under section 1105(a) of title
12 31, United States Code, for each of fiscal years 2023
13 through 2027, a dedicated budget line item for inciner-
14 ators and waste-to-energy waste disposal alternatives to
15 burn pits.

16 **SEC. 715. AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS FOR EX-**
17 **PANSION OF CLAIMS AUTOMATION.**

18 There is authorized to be appropriated to the Sec-
19 retary of Veterans Affairs \$150,000,000 for fiscal year
20 2023 to continue the modernization and expansion of ca-
21 pabilities and capacity of the Veterans Benefits Manage-
22 ment System of the Department of Veterans Affairs to
23 support expected increased claims processing for newly eli-
24 gible veterans pursuant to this Act and the amendments
25 made by this Act.

1 **SEC. 716. BURN PIT REGISTRY UPDATES.**

2 (a) INDIVIDUALS ELIGIBLE TO UPDATE.—

3 (1) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180 days
4 after the date of the enactment of this Act, the Sec-
5 retary of Veterans Affairs shall take actions nec-
6 essary to ensure that the burn pit registry may be
7 updated with the cause of death of a deceased reg-
8 istered individual by—

9 (A) an individual designated by such de-
10 ceased registered individual; or

11 (B) if no such individual is designated, an
12 immediate family member of such deceased reg-
13 istered individual.

14 (2) DESIGNATION.—The Secretary shall pro-
15 vide, with respect to the burn pit registry, a process
16 by which a registered individual may make a des-
17 ignation for purposes of paragraph (1)(A).

18 (b) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

19 (1) The term “burn pit registry” means the
20 registry established under section 201 of the Dig-
21 nified Burial and Other Veterans’ Benefits Improve-
22 ment Act of 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C.
23 527 note).

24 (2) The term “immediate family member”, with
25 respect to a deceased individual, means—

1 (A) the spouse, parent, brother, sister, or
2 adult child of the individual;

3 (B) an adult person to whom the indi-
4 vidual stands in loco parentis; or

5 (C) any other adult person—

6 (i) living in the household of the indi-
7 vidual at the time of the death of the indi-
8 vidual; and

9 (ii) related to the individual by blood
10 or marriage.

11 (3) The term “registered individual” means an
12 individual registered with the burn pit registry.

13 **SEC. 717. BURN PIT TRANSPARENCY.**

14 (a) **SHORT TITLE.**—This section may be cited as the
15 “SFC Heath Robinson Burn Pit Transparency Act”.

16 (b) **NOTIFICATIONS AND REPORTS REGARDING RE-**
17 **PORTED CASES OF BURN PIT EXPOSURE.**—

18 (1) **QUARTERLY NOTIFICATIONS.**—

19 (A) **IN GENERAL.**—On a quarterly basis,
20 the Secretary of Veterans Affairs shall submit
21 to the appropriate congressional committees a
22 report on each reported case of burn pit expo-
23 sure by a covered veteran reported during the
24 previous quarter.

1 (B) ELEMENTS.—Each report submitted
2 under subparagraph (A) shall include, with re-
3 spect to each reported case of burn pit exposure
4 of a covered veteran included in the report, the
5 following:

6 (i) Notice of the case, including the
7 medical facility at which the case was re-
8 ported.

9 (ii) Notice of, as available—

10 (I) the enrollment status of the
11 covered veteran with respect to the
12 patient enrollment system of the De-
13 partment of Veterans Affairs under
14 section 1705(a) of title 38, United
15 States Code;

16 (II) a summary of all health care
17 visits by the covered veteran at the
18 medical facility at which the case was
19 reported that are related to the case;

20 (III) the demographics of the
21 covered veteran, including age, sex,
22 and race;

23 (IV) any non-Department of Vet-
24 erans Affairs health care benefits that
25 the covered veteran receives;

1 (V) the Armed Force in which
2 the covered veteran served and the
3 rank of the covered veteran;

4 (VI) the period in which the cov-
5 ered veteran served;

6 (VII) each location of an open
7 burn pit from which the covered vet-
8 eran was exposed to toxic airborne
9 chemicals and fumes during such
10 service;

11 (VIII) the medical diagnoses of
12 the covered veteran and the treatment
13 provided to the veteran; and

14 (IX) whether the covered veteran
15 is registered in the Airborne Hazards
16 and Open Burn Pit Registry.

17 (C) PROTECTION OF INFORMATION.—The
18 Secretary shall ensure that the reports sub-
19 mitted under subparagraph (A) do not include
20 the identity of covered veterans or contain other
21 personally identifiable data.

22 (2) ANNUAL REPORT ON CASES.—

23 (A) IN GENERAL.—Not later than 180
24 days after the date of the enactment of this
25 Act, and annually thereafter, the Secretary of

1 Veterans Affairs, in collaboration with the Sec-
2 retary of Defense, shall submit to the appro-
3 priate congressional committees a report detail-
4 ing the following:

5 (i) The total number of covered vet-
6 erans.

7 (ii) The total number of claims for
8 disability compensation under chapter 11
9 of title 38, United States Code, approved
10 and the total number denied by the Sec-
11 retary of Veterans Affairs with respect to
12 a covered veteran, and for each such de-
13 nial, the rationale of the denial.

14 (iii) A comprehensive list of—

15 (I) the conditions for which cov-
16 ered veterans seek treatment; and

17 (II) the locations of the open
18 burn pits from which the covered vet-
19 erans were exposed to toxic airborne
20 chemicals and fumes.

21 (iv) Identification of any illnesses re-
22 lating to exposure to open burn pits that
23 formed the basis for the Secretary to
24 award benefits, including entitlement to

1 service connection or an increase in dis-
2 ability rating.

3 (v) The total number of covered vet-
4 erans who died after seeking care for an
5 illness relating to exposure to an open burn
6 pit.

7 (vi) Any updates or trends with re-
8 spect to the information described in
9 clauses (i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and (v) that the
10 Secretary determines appropriate.

11 (B) MATTERS INCLUDED IN FIRST RE-
12 PORT.—The Secretary shall include in the first
13 report under paragraph (1) information speci-
14 fied in paragraph (1)(B) with respect to re-
15 ported cases of burn pit exposure made during
16 the period beginning January 1, 1990, and end-
17 ing on the day before the date of the enactment
18 of this Act.

19 (3) INFORMATION REGARDING THE AIRBORNE
20 HAZARDS AND OPEN BURN PIT REGISTRY.—

21 (A) NOTICE.—The Secretary of Veterans
22 Affairs shall ensure that a medical professional
23 of the Department of Veterans Affairs informs
24 a veteran of the Airborne Hazards and Open
25 Burn Pit Registry if the veteran presents at a

1 medical facility of the Department for treat-
2 ment that the veteran describes as being related
3 to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the veteran
4 to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes caused
5 by open burn pits.

6 (B) DISPLAY.—In making information
7 public regarding the number of participants in
8 the Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Reg-
9 istry, the Secretary shall display such numbers
10 by both State and by congressional district.

11 (4) COMPTROLLER GENERAL REPORT.—Not
12 later than 180 days after the date of the enactment
13 of this Act, the Comptroller General of the United
14 States shall submit to the appropriate congressional
15 committees a report containing an assessment of the
16 effectiveness of any memorandum of understanding
17 or memorandum of agreement entered into by the
18 Secretary of Veterans Affairs with respect to—

19 (A) the processing of reported cases of
20 burn pit exposure; and

21 (B) the coordination of care and provision
22 of health care relating to such cases at medical
23 facilities of the Department of Veterans Affairs
24 and at non-Department facilities.

25 (5) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

1 (A) The term “Airborne Hazards and
2 Open Burn Pit Registry” means the registry es-
3 tablished by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs
4 under section 201 of the Dignified Burial and
5 Other Veterans’ Benefits Improvement Act of
6 2012 (Public Law 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527
7 note).

8 (B) The term “appropriate congressional
9 committees” means—

10 (i) the Committee on Veterans’ Af-
11 fairs and the Committee on Armed Serv-
12 ices of the Senate; and

13 (ii) The Committee on Veterans’ Af-
14 fairs and the Committee on Armed Serv-
15 ices of the House of Representatives.

16 (C) The term “covered veteran” means a
17 veteran who presents at a medical facility of the
18 Department of Veterans Affairs (or in a non-
19 Department facility pursuant to section 1703 or
20 1703A of title 38, United States Code) for
21 treatment that the veteran describes as being
22 related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the
23 veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes
24 caused by open burn pits at any time while
25 serving in the Armed Forces.

1 (D) The term “open burn pit” has the
2 meaning given that term in section 201(c) of
3 the Dignified Burial and Other Veterans’ Bene-
4 fits Improvement Act of 2012 (Public Law
5 112–260; 38 U.S.C. 527 note).

6 (E) The term “reported case of burn pit
7 exposure” means each instance in which a vet-
8 eran presents at a medical facility of the De-
9 partment of Veterans Affairs (or in a non-De-
10 partment facility pursuant to section 1703 or
11 1703A of title 38, United States Code) for
12 treatment that the veteran describes as being
13 related to, or ancillary to, the exposure of the
14 veteran to toxic airborne chemicals and fumes
15 caused by open burn pits at any time while
16 serving in the Armed Forces.

Passed the House of Representatives March 3,
2022.

Attest:

Clerk.

117TH CONGRESS
2^D SESSION

H. R. 3967

AN ACT

To improve health care and benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances, and for other purposes.